Promising Practices in Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Funded Programs and Services

Final Report

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Table of Contents

Management Response i

Executive Summary iii

1. Introduction 1

- 1.1 Review Objectives 2
- 1.2 Review Approach 3
- 1.3 Organization of the Report 6

2. Background and Context 7

3. Challenges 11

- 3.1 Key Challenges Common to all Promising Practices 11
- 3.2 Challenges Specific to Rural and Mid-Range Communities 14
- 3.3 Specific Challenges for People with Different Types of Disabilities 14

4. What Works Well in EAPD Promising Practices 17

- 4.1 Client Service Process 17
- 4.2 Reducing Attitudinal and Perception Barriers 19
- 4.3 Reducing Environmental Barriers 21
- 4.4 Reducing Educational Barriers 24
- 4.5 Reducing Financial Disincentives 26
- 4.6 Essential Services for Success 27

5. Conclusions 31

Appendix A: Promising Practices Templates 35

Appendix B: Bibliography 95

Appendix C: Research Instruments 99

Appendix D: Pre-assessment Checklist 109

List of Tables

Table 1.1 EAPD Promising Practices 5
Table 3.2 Overview of Key Challenges and What Works Well 16
Table 4.1 Essential Services for Success 28

List of Figures

Figure 3.1 Unemployment Rates of Persons with Disabilities[1] by Disability Type, 1991 15
Figure 4.1 Client Service Process 18
Figure 4.2 Labour Force Participation Rates of Women and Men with Disabilities by Highest Level of Education, 1991 24

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[1] The term "persons with disabilities" (as opposed to "people with disabilities") is only used in this report if it appeared in the original source documents.

List of Acronyms

ASP	Adult Services Program
BHF	Behavioural Health Foundation
CCI	Career Connections Inc
CPP	Canada Pension Plan
EAPD	Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities
GVS	Gastown Vocational Services
HALS	Health and Activity Limitation Survey
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
LD/ADHD	Assessment of EAPD applicants with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
LICO	Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-offs
NEON	Networking Employment Opportunities NOW
NPHS	National Population Health Survey
POLARIS	Co-ordination of Transition from High School to Skills Training
PP	Promising Practice
PPP	Promising Practices Project
PPPC	Promising Practices Project Committee
SLID	Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics
THEO	Kamloops Avenues to Capturing Employment Program /THEO BC
VA Registry	Visible Abilities Registry
VRDP	Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons

Preamble

The Promising Practices Project is a partial evaluation focused on what works with respect to program design / program delivery practices dealing with employability programming for people with disabilities. It yields a compendium of promising practices and is the first step in building a knowledge base that will facilitate information sharing and contribute to future evaluation activities.

Management Response

The Promising Practices review was undertaken jointly by the Federal Government and five Provinces (Manitoba, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island).

There were nine Promising Practices selected for this review providing different approaches to assisting people with disabilities in making the transition to or return to employment. The review was largely undertaken to document how these Promising Practices operate and to identify factors or characteristics that were critical for their success. The review team was able to identify factors that were common to all Promising Practices as well as project specific characteristics that could be transferable to other programs or services. These factors can now be used by federal and provincial jurisdictions in designing new initiatives or in evaluation and review processes of existing programs.

From the perspective of the Provinces, the report also provides a description of initiatives in the other participating provinces that can be considered for program enhancement or development within their jurisdiction. Therefore, the review and final report provides a document that not only identifies critical characteristics of employment services for people with disabilities, it also provides a reference document of already proven effective practices for provincial jurisdictions to consider for alternative or enhanced programming within their own jurisdictions.

The joint Federal-Provincial Promising Practices Sub-Committee that worked with the contractor throughout the review is satisfied that the objectives of the review have been met. In addition, the Sub-Committee believes that when the final report is distributed, it will promote information sharing and networking among those involved in the delivery of employability programming for people with disabilities. This in turn will have a positive benefit to the overall integration and inclusion of people with disabilities in Canadian society.

Executive Summary

Disability issues have become more visible in public policy over the past few decades. Depending on how one defines "disability", there are between 2.5 and 4.8 million Canadians with disabilities.[2] These numbers are steadily increasing as the population ages.[3] In addition, proportionally more people with disabilities live below the poverty line compared to those without disabilities.[4] The federal government's commitment to support people with disabilities includes spending more than $6 billion annually to provide programs, services and support, including employability and employment-related initiatives.[5]

Since 1986, when people with disabilities were guaranteed equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federal/provincial/territorial policies, programs and publications have approached disability as a citizenship rights issue. Citizenship means equality, inclusion, rights and responsibilities, and empowerment and participation in all aspects of Canadian society. By enshrining citizenship rights to all people with disabilities, the government acknowledges the important role people with disabilities have in shaping public policy and the contribution they make to Canada's social fabric and economy.

The focus on citizenship has changed the public's perception of disability. Instead of narrowly focusing on an individual's inabilities, attention is now given to measures such as accommodations in the workplace and barrier-free architecture to create more inclusive environments. Human rights and employment equity legislations have been passed to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and to remove disincentives and barriers in welfare and labour market programming.

In spite of these advances, barriers, disincentives and discrimination against people with disabilities remain, preventing their full economic participation in society. In early 1997, federal, provincial and territorial governments began working together to explore ways to improve and build on elements of the jointly-funded Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program, a program that had been in place since 1962. In October 1997, Ministers responsible for Social Services endorsed a Multilateral Framework for Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD). EAPD replaced VRDP.

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[2] The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) indicates that there were 2.5 million Canadians living with disabilities in 1994, the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) reports that there are 3.5 million Canadians living with disabilities in 1991, and the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) reports 4.8 million in 1994. These are attributable to the definitions used. For example, HALS defines "disabilities" as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within range considered normal for a human being. NPHS and SLID define disabilities as individuals having a restriction of activity if respondents answer positively to a series of questions related to activities performed at home, school or work (Bunch and Crawford, *Persons with Disabilities: Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*. June 1998).

[3] *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, A Vision Paper, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 1998, Appendix B.

[4] HALS data from 1991 showed that people with disabilities who were employed had a poverty rate of 13.4 %. HALS uses Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (LICO), which are based on family income and adjusted according to family size and the community in which they live. The proportion of people with disabilities living below the low income cut-offs varies considerably, depending on whether a person's livelihood is derived from earnings, from one of the income support programs, or through support from family or friends. People with disabilities who must rely on social assistance for their income support have by far the greatest likelihood of living in poverty. Almost 28% of those receiving CPP/QPP disability benefits were poor; 14.5% of those receiving Workers' Compensation were poor; and 64.1% of those on social assistance were poor. http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sdd-dds/odi/documents/living_with_disability/chap52_e.shtml#2.

[5] HRDC, *Lessons Learned: Disability Policies and Programs*, October 1997. Final Report and Technical Report, pp.1.

The EAPD multilateral framework guided the subsequent negotiation of bilateral agreements between Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and provincial governments for the sharing of eligible costs of programs and services that help Canadians with disabilities acquire the skills, experience and supports necessary to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment.[6]

Review of EAPD Promising Practices

The Promising Practices Project (PPP) is a multilateral EAPD research project designed to provide a core base of knowledge on what works for whom in employability programming for people with disabilities. Specifically, the objectives of the PPP were to:

- Research and document nine Promising Practices case studies in employability projects and services cost-shared under EAPD in British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island;
- Provide a completed template for each of the nine Promising Practices, which clearly delineates the practice and includes the context /background, challenges faced, solutions, results, and future outlook; and
- Provide an integrated analysis of the cases and existing literature/knowledge in terms of lessons learned and what works in employability programming for people with disabilities.

Provincial representatives identified these Promising Practices (PPs), each of which is perceived as an organization that provides programs and services that are successfully improving the employability of people with disabilities.

Findings about What Works in EAPD Promising Practices

The following represents the core findings from the nine Promising Practices on what works for whom in employability programming for people with disabilities:

All nine Promising Practices are **highly client focused**. The basis for their success and high client satisfaction come from the fact that programs are flexible or tailored to the needs of each individual. This allows clients to enhance their learning and employment preparations. Employment or educational plans are created according to each client's abilities and limitations. Client centered services also tend to raise clients' self-esteem and confidence, an issue for all clients interviewed for this study.

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[6] Quebec did not endorse the Multilateral Framework although it has signed an EAPD Agreement with the Government of Canada. EAPD Agreements are not yet in place with Northwest Territories, Yukon, or Nunavut. Northwest Territories and Yukon, however, have endorsed the Multilateral Framework.

All nine PPs look at their clients in a **holistic** way. They consider a person's likes and dislikes, abilities and limitations, housing and family situations, technological needs for school and work, and social and interpersonal skills. Clients appreciate this approach. The approach also allows for trust between the client and the Promising Practice.

All nine PPs recognize the **importance of education and/or on-the-job training** as a starting point in clients' employment pursuits. Many clients have few or no marketable skills. Others have skills that are outdated. Yet others have skills that they are no longer able to use as a result of a disability. Literature demonstrates that education is key to employment and level of income. Also, it shows that the nature of work is changing. As a result, initiatives to encourage people with disabilities to further their education and develop their skills are essential to their acquiring gainful employment.

Staff in all PPs mentioned **educating and raising awareness of employers** and the general public on the value that people with disabilities bring to our society and workplaces as highly important. Employers interviewed for the purpose of this study indicated that they knew very little about disabilities and accommodations before they entered into a partnership with a Promising Practice. Many staff members as well as the employers themselves indicated that educating employers is one of the most important activities to undertake for the purpose of increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the general workforce.

Staff in the PPs emphasized **partnerships with employers** as one of the most important tools to allow clients a chance to get a job placement as well as increasing their chances of employment after the placement. Employers interviewed for this study were mostly employers who had opened their doors for a job placement. In several cases, employers hired the client upon the completion of their placements. In other cases, when employers did not have the resources to hire anyone, they sometimes extended offers of volunteer work placements.

According to PP staff and their clients, **volunteer work** is valuable in that it allows clients a chance to enhance their skills and to build their resumes. Yet, volunteer work is not paid work and, in many cases, does not hold the promise of greater financial independence and getting off social assistance. As such, the focus should be to enter into partnerships with employers to balance clients' needs for work experience and skills enhancement with opportunities that have a chance of leading to permanent employment, and finding employment that pays more than minimum wage.

PPs that have work placements as part of their programs **facilitate on-going communication that assists both employers and clients** for the duration of the placement. Meetings and open lines of communication between Promising Practice staff, employer and client are instrumental in helping all parties understand what they can and cannot do. For example, employers may have certain work-related requirements that a client cannot meet. Clients and employers alike value this three-way communication as it provides both parties a point of contact to discuss issues that arise. Employers interviewed for this study indicated that this support is often a catalyst for them to provide job placement opportunities for PP clients.

The PPs reported having **highly dedicated and committed leadership and staff**. Staff are the backbone of these organizations. All PPs stressed the importance of getting to know their clients well in order to provide the individual services clients need. Their ability to develop client trust impacts on both the success of the programs as well as the employment opportunities the programs facilitate. Staff are highly knowledgeable about employability issues as they pertain to people with disabilities and see it as essential to be up-to-date on the latest approaches, methods and research to be able to continue providing the best services possible.

The PPs straddle the line between **being supportive and challenging** in their interactions with their clients. PP staff indicated that it is important to allow clients to make their own decisions (i.e., they are allowed to make their own mistakes) and assume certain responsibilities (i.e., showing up on time to courses and work placements). Some Promising Practices, such as Gastown Vocational Services, give clients two or three chances and if they still do not meet the expectations, they may be asked to come back to the program at a later time when they have addressed their issues and are ready to engage fully with the program. Others, such as the Behavioural Health Foundation, have a zero tolerance policy in place when it comes to any addictive substances. At the same time, support is given generously when needed, and assistance is provided to help clients graduate to greater levels of responsibilities and decision-making.

The Promising Practices have produced positive results. **Clients' satisfaction with the service provided** by the Promising Practices is high. Some clients are in the process of realizing their dreams of fully participating in society. For other clients, the Promising Practices offer the first rays of hope that they too can achieve their dreams.

There have also been positive results in terms of the number of individuals who became employed after graduating from a Promising Practice program (Appendix A features PP templates that outline their respective qualitative and quantitative results). Some Promising Practices are collaborating with federal and/or provincial governments to offer **wage subsidies for employers**. These financial incentives often make it more feasible for employers to provide job placements and allow for financial flexibility when taking on clients who may need a longer training period. Another factor that must be taken into account when talking about results and sustainability of results is that most disabilities are permanent and many are characterized by periods when the disability is more intense or debilitating.

Each of the nine Promising Practices can be defined as a creative or innovative employment focused project or service that has demonstrated solid performance or has demonstrated potential to achieve high levels of performance in meeting its employability objectives for people with disabilities.

1. Introduction

Disability is a public policy issue in Canada for several reasons. Depending on the data source and definition of disability, there are between 2.5 and 4.8 million Canadians with disabilities.[7] These numbers are steadily increasing as the population ages.[8] Furthermore, proportionally more people with disabilities live below the poverty line compared to those with no disabilities.[9] The costs to the federal government of providing programs, services and income support, etc. are more than $6 billion annually.[10]

Early in 1997, federal, provincial and territorial governments began exploring how to improve and go forward with the jointly funded Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program. This program had been in place since 1962. In October 1997, the multilateral framework for the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) was approved by Ministers for Social Services, and EAPD replaced the VRDP. The framework guided negotiation of bilateral agreements between the two orders of government to share the eligible costs of programs and services geared at helping people with disabilities acquire the skills, experience and supports they need to participate fully in the labour market.[11]

EAPD focuses on employment and employability for people with disabilities. The Promising Practice (PP) case studies prepared for this project are funded under the EAPD, meaning their programs and services focus on increasing the employability of people with disabilities. These services can relate to an individual's first steps towards working, support at work, ability to continue working, or retaining employment as in the case of vocational or employment crisis. These Promising Practices were chosen because of their contribution to assisting people with disabilities become employable or employed.

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[7] The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) indicates that there were 2.5 million Canadians living with disabilities in 1994, the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) reports that there are 3.5 million Canadians living with disabilities in 1991, and the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) reports 4.8 million in 1994. These are attributable to the definitions used. For example, HALS defines "disabilities" as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within range considered normal for a human being. NPHS and SLID define disabilities as individuals having a restriction of activity if respondents answer positively to a series of questions related to activities performed at home, school or work (Bunch and Crawford, *Persons with Disabilities: Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*. June 1998).

[8] *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, A Vision Paper, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 1998, Appendix B.

[9] HALS data from 1991 showed that people with disabilities who were employed had a poverty rate of 13.4 %. HALS uses Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-offs (LICO), which are based on family income and adjusted according to family size and the community in which they live. The proportion of people with disabilities living below the low income cut-offs varies considerably, depending on whether a person's livelihood is derived from earnings, from one of the income support programs, or through support from family or friends. People with disabilities who must rely on social assistance for their income support have by far the greatest likelihood of living in poverty. Almost 28% of those receiving CPP/QPP disability benefits were poor; 14.5% of those receiving Workers' Compensation were poor; and 64.1% of those on social assistance were poor. http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sdd-dds/odi/documents/living_with_disability/chap52_e.shtml#2.

[10] HRDC, *Lessons Learned: Disability Policies and Programs*, October 1997. Final Report and Technical Report, pg.1.

[11] Quebec did not endorse the Multilateral Framework although it has signed an EAPD Agreement with the Government of Canada. EAPD Agreements are not yet in place with Northwest Territories, Yukon, or Nunavut. Northwest Territories and Yukon, however, have endorsed the Multilateral Framework.

Research in Canada and abroad points toward several key considerations when developing policies and programs to enhance people with disabilities' employment related successes. For example, disability issues and topics are inter-related and often require a coordinated approach. Areas that seem independent, such as employment, transportation, housing, access to rehabilitation and training are directly linked. According to Project Coordinators of the Promising Practices, such complexity requires a holistic approach for successful program and policy development.

People with disabilities form a diverse group, comprised of individuals with varying needs, circumstances, types and severity of disability. As such, they face a range of barriers to employability. As noted by Project Coordinators, personalized approaches that are flexible as well as adaptable to the needs of the individual are most successful.

The overall purpose of this report is to present current findings on what works for whom in employability programming for people with disabilities. This report presents a synthesis of information gathered through site visits and documentation of nine Promising Practices in Canada.

1.1 Review Objectives

The Promising Practices Project (PPP) was designed to provide a core base of knowledge on what works for whom in employability programming for people with disabilities. This project was undertaken to enhance the knowledge of the operational effectiveness of EAPD and to set the stage for more comprehensive evaluation activities in the future.

Specifically, the objectives of the PPP were to:

- Research and document nine Promising Practices case studies in employability projects and services cost-shared under EAPD;
- Provide a completed template for each of the nine Promising Practices that clearly delineates the Practice and includes the context /background, challenges faced, solutions, results, and future outlook; and
- Provide an integrated analysis of the cases and existing literature/knowledge in terms of lessons learned and what works in employability programming for people with disabilities.

The results of the review of the Promising Practices should promote information sharing and networking among those involved in the delivery of employability programming for people with disabilities. The results should increase awareness of innovative solutions and provide a basis for improved management practices. Ultimately, the results of these Promising Practices should spark ideas and stimulate further action by other EAPD-funded practices as well as other entities that focus on the employability and employment needs of people with disabilities.

1.2 Review Approach

Conducting this review involved two key phases:

Phase I: Identification of possible PPs
Phase II: Review of chosen PPs.

The section below discusses key steps followed during each phase.

Phase I:

The Promising Practices explored in this study were identified and nominated by the provinces. In preparation for the study, provinces selected an organization, a program or an approach and submitted their nomination to the Promising Practices Project Committee (PPPC) for review.

Two tools were used in this process: a pre-assessment checklist and a case study template. The pre-assessment checklist (see Appendix D) requires yes/no answers to 19 questions, which relate to the Promising Practices' relevance, innovativeness, replicability and existing documentation. If a province chooses to nominate a practice, the program administrator's approval must be solicited. Once this has been done, the second tool, the case study template, is used. Information is populated in this template and forwarded to the PPPC along with the pre-assessment checklist and other supporting documentation, if relevant. Programs are then referred for further research, validation and documentation.

This process assumes that there are many practices from which to choose. However, at the time when the practices were to be identified and selected for this study, there were only nine Promising Practices deemed appropriate to be put forward. As a result, all nine were selected after being assessed using the two tools described above.

Phase II:

The Promising Practices Project, which involves these nine Promising Practices, is primarily a qualitative research study that follows a case study approach. The case studies were developed using the following lines of evidence:

- Literature review/Internet research;
- Site visits; and
- Document reviews.

A brief description of each of these methods follows next.

Literature Review / Internet Research:

To ensure a thorough understanding of issues related to EAPD and to research more fully the nine Promising Practices, the first step in this process involved reviewing current literature on employment and employability of people with disabilities. The literature review provided a basis from which to interpret and synthesize findings and to develop the research tools.

Relevant Canadian and international literature was reviewed. This review included academic articles, government documents, and publications from non-government organizations and non-profit agencies published over the last five years. A bibliography of the literature reviewed is provided in Appendix B.

An extensive Internet search was conducted on key words (e.g., employment programs for people with disabilities, disability programs, labour market, employment equity), which revealed a number of additional pieces of highly useful information for this study. The more comprehensive and interesting websites are included in the bibliography in Appendix B.

Site Visits:

Site visits were conducted with each of the nine Promising Practices. The purpose of the site visits was to validate the information in the existing templates as well as to document progress and additional details of the programs. Interviews and focus group meetings were held with Project Coordinators, clients, former clients, family members, employers, funders, provincial representatives and others. These individual and group interviews, which encompassed a range of stakeholders, allowed the researchers to see the Practice from a variety of different angles and perspectives.

Document Reviews:

Each Promising Practice provided documentation on its success, number and type of clients and/or information on the services provided. The researchers reviewed the relevant documentation at each site to gain additional insight into the success of the program and to validate and add weight to the research findings. These documents included annual reports, videos, financial statements, client satisfaction surveys, follow-up surveys, press releases, news articles and promotional materials.

Table 1.1 lists each of the Promising Practices visited for this study, their location, their client target groups and the type of services provided by each. Detailed case study reports for each of these PPs can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1.1
EAPD Promising Practices

PP Name	Location	Target Group	Type of Service
Gastown Vocational Services (GVS)	Vancouver, BC	People with severe mental health disabilities	Rehabilitation – includes assessments, work readiness programs, work placements, etc.
Co-ordination of Transition from High School to Skills Training (POLARIS)	Vancouver, BC	People with developmental disabilities	Transitional vocational planning.
Adult Services Program (ASP)	Vancouver, BC	People with all types of disabilities	Assessments, provision of adaptive aids and technologies, etc.
Kamloops Avenues to Capturing Employment Program /THEO BC (THEO)	Kamloops, BC	People with all types of disabilities	Rehabilitation – includes assessments, work readiness programs, work placements, etc. Facilitation of the acquisition of adaptive aids and technologies.
Behavioural Health Foundation (BHF)	Winnipeg, MB	People with addictions and their spouses and dependent children	Residential addictions treatment facility with skills development programs, employment readiness training and work placements.
Career Connections Inc. (CCI)	Brandon, MB	People with all types of disabilities	Community based employment services, including assessments, counselling, employment preparation, follow-up and support.
Visible Abilities Registry (VA Registry)	Fredericton, NB	People with all types of disabilities	Maintaining a registry, matching client skills and employer requests, referrals.
Assessment of EAPD applicants with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (LD/ADHD)	Halifax, NS	People with learning disabilities	An interview tool to assist counsellors and clients in the development of realistic training/career planning goals.
Networking Employment Opportunities NOW (NEON)	Montague, PEI	People with all types of disabilities	Coordination of services in the region, employability programs, etc.

1.3 Organization of the Report

In order to present the integrated findings from the literature review, site visits and related documentation, the report is structured in the following way:

Section 2.0 of this report, **Background and Context,** provides a summary of some of the initiatives put in place by different orders of government in the context of this research.

Section 3.0, Challenges, describes the key challenges and barriers that are common to the Promising Practices studied. These include challenges and barriers that are also more specific to programs located in rural or mid-range communities as well as to those located in major urban centres.[12]

Section 4.0, What Works Well in EAPD Promising Practices, presents the kinds of services, programs and approaches used by Promising Practices that have proven to be successful in addressing challenges and barriers.

Section 5.0, Conclusions, summarizes the findings from this research.

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[12] The term "mid-range community" refers to a non-metropolitan urban area (census agglomeration) with a population greater than 10,000 but less than that of a metropolitan area.

2. Background and Context

Over the last few years, federal and provincial/territorial governments have initiated a number of initiatives geared towards helping and supporting people with disabilities become employable or employed. This section describes several such initiatives.

One of these initiatives started in 1996 when Canadian First Ministers agreed to make the needs of people with disabilities a priority. The federal and provincial/territorial governments agreed that additional measures were needed to address negativity towards people with disabilities, realizing that this would not disappear on its own. Thus, a federal Task Force on Disability Issues ("the Scott Task Force") was created to seek the advice and guidance from Canadians with disabilities on future government actions. The Government of Canada saw this consultative approach as instrumental in setting the stage for allowing people with disabilities full and equal participation in society, be it in their communities or in the labour force.

Financial disincentives to work have traditionally been a key barrier to people with disabilities acquiring economic independence. For example, many welfare systems classify people with disabilities as "permanently unemployable". Similarly, the Canada Pension Plan used to require that a person be either entirely in or out of the workforce (i.e., employable or not employable). The reality is that many people with disabilities can work, given the appropriate accommodations and supports. [13] If finding employment means losing a financial safety net, it may perhaps be a more prudent choice not to work. People with disabilities need programs that provide assurance that income will continue when labour market participation is interrupted or not possible for a period of time.

The Canada Pension Plan recently underwent significant changes to respond to these challenges.[14] The federal government created the CPP Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program in 1997. The program was designed to make it possible for some people with severe disabilities to become part of and remain in the work force by personalizing a rehabilitation plan for each client.[15] The plan includes elements such as the nature and level of guidance required, the process of how to return-to-work, skills and retraining requirements, and developing job search skills. The added incentives for people participating in this plan allow them to:

- Do volunteer work or attend school without fear of losing benefits (as long as they have a continuing disability);
- Continue to receive benefits for three months after they start/return to work; and,
- Have their income assistance application fast-tracked should the same disability prevent them from working in the future.[16]

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[13] Gail Fawcett, PhD, *Living with Disability in Canada: An Economic Portrait*, 1996, pg. 136.

[14] *Annual Report of the Canada Pension Plan* – 1999-2000. pg. 16.

[15] *Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program.* http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp/cpp/vocational_e.shtml.

[16] *Facts About Changes to CPP Disability.* http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp/cpp/facts/factdis_e.shtml.

In 1998, federal, provincial and territorial ministers gathered to develop *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, a framework that proposes a "Canadian Approach" to disability issues.[17] The intent of this initiative is to pursue a seamless and coordinated system of benefits and services for people with disabilities to enhance their employability. It is meant to ensure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as all other Canadians.

Since 1986, when people with disabilities were guaranteed equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federal/provincial/territorial policies, programs and publications have approached disability as a citizenship rights issue. Citizenship means equality, inclusion, rights and responsibilities, and empowerment and participation in all aspects of Canadian society. By enshrining citizenship rights for all people with disabilities, the government acknowledges the important role people with disabilities have in shaping public policy and the contribution they make to Canada's social fabric and economy.

The focus on citizenship has changed the public's perception of disability. Instead of narrowly focusing on an individual's inabilities, attention is now given to measures such as accommodations in the workplace and barrier-free architecture to create more inclusive environments. Human rights and employment equity legislations have been passed to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and to remove disincentives and barriers in welfare and labour market programming.

In order to acknowledge these changing attitudes, *In Unison* identified three key building blocks as critical success factors for including people with disabilities in society. These building blocks are as follows:

- Disability Supports: These refer to a range of goods, services and supports tailored to the individual requirements for daily living. It will always be necessary to provide for the availability and accessibility of disability supports (e.g., technical aids and devices; special equipment; homemaker, attendant or interpreter services; life skills; physiotherapy and occupational therapy; respite care) which respond to individual needs. These goods, services and supports are essential for active participation at home, at school and in the community and are a key component of maximizing personal and economic independence.
- Employment: Persons with disabilities require access to opportunities for education, training and employment which together comprise the basis for economic independence. The intent of *In Unison* is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and help promote more work and volunteer opportunities. Enhancing employability means supporting access to education, providing supports and flexibility in training programs, making job accommodation available and offering job seekers and employers adequate information.

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[17] *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, A Vision Paper, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 1998, pg.14.

- Income: Some individuals with disabilities may not be able to support themselves sufficiently or at all. Governments recognize the need for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible – but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs.

In Unison is a major stepping-stone towards the development of legislation that is inclusive and complementary.

EAPD and the nine Promising Practices exist within this context. While there have been changes to legislation and programs to encourage people with disabilities to develop their skills and participate in the labour market without being penalized, there are, nevertheless, a variety of challenges facing people with disabilities and organizations such as the PPs in moving forward. The next section presents these challenges.

3. Challenges

This section describes the specific challenges faced by both the programs and services offered by the EAPD Promising Practices and the clients served (i.e., people with disabilities). Interviews with clients and former clients indicated that their challenges are more of a personal nature as opposed to a systemic nature.[18]

The first part of this section discusses challenges that are common to all Promising Practices. The second part looks at challenges that pertain to PPs operating in rural or mid-range communities. The last part of this section provides an overview of the key challenges experienced by people with different types of disabilities and what approaches worked well in meeting these challenges.

3.1 Key Challenges Common to all Promising Practices

An analysis of the nine Promising Practices indicates that they face numerous challenges. The following presents some of the key challenges encountered by each of the programs and their clients, either directly or indirectly.

Many people with disabilities interviewed for this study have experienced negative societal perceptions and stereotypes that contribute to a lack of self confidence.[19] A lack of self-confience may limit a person's willingness to try activities that for them represent a risk. Therefore, one of the greatest challenges when preparing people with disabilities for employment is to ensure that the environment for training or development is supportive of the individual client and helps to build his or her self-esteem.[20] Program Coordinators and PP staff stated that building clients' self-confidence requires an understanding of the client's needs, and an ability to nurture relationships that result in trust. Interviews with clients and former clients of the PP's visited for this study said that when trust had been established, their coping, social and employment readiness skills were enhanced.

> *"The work preparation was good. I wouldn't have been able to get that mental readiness to go looking for work without the program. I didn't think I was worthy."* Promising Practice client

In order to provide employability and employment related programs and services, Project Coordinators noted that it is essential that a PP has **staff with the expertise, experience and understanding required** to address the barriers and issues faced by people with various types and degrees of disability. It can be challenging to find and retain staff with these skill sets, particularly if limited funding prevents the PPs from offering a perceived competitive salary. Having the "right" people in both staff and leadership positions is essential for a Practice to succeed according to Project Coordinators and representatives from the PPs' funding agencies.

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[18] Systemic issues refer to policies and practices of an organization, which directly or indirectly operate to sustain the disadvantage of people with disabilities. They also refer to value systems that are imbedded in society, which support and allow discriminatory actions based on perceptions.

[19] Self-confidence refers to feeling self-reliant and believing in one's abilities.

[20] Self-esteem refers to having a good opinion of oneself.

The ultimate goal of the nine Promising Practices is to help people with disabilities find and/or maintain employment. Both employers and clients pointed out that **a good match between the needs of the employer and the client's skill sets and abilities** is a challenge that must be met in order for the results to be successful. While this is important for the employer, it is perhaps even more important for clients as an unsuccessful match may erode confidence, preventing clients from taking on other opportunities.

"Having the aids provided not only allows me to do my job, but it puts me on a level playing field with my colleagues."
Promising Practice client

"It has helped me understand my limitations and can-dos. It has given me a chance to try a dream opportunity."
Promising Practice client

Unique challenges exist to ensure that the specific needs of Aboriginal peoples with disabilities are met. It is estimated that about one in six Canadians of all ages has a disability.[21] Statistics reveal that as many as 30% of Aboriginal adults report a disability.[22] Many Aboriginal peoples with disabilities lack trust in the entire system of government-sponsored support. The challenge for the PPs, according to Project Coordinators and staff, is in **nurturing relationships that build trust and confidence in the program** and in promoting awareness of the support that is available. Staff need to be culturally sensitive to Aboriginal peoples as well as sensitive to their unique needs.

Many employers expressed a lack of general knowledge about people with disabilities and the value they can offer as employees. Employers are often unaware of the various supports, accommodations and technologies that are available to them. PP staff indicated that **educating employers** is one of the most important activities they engage in. Partnerships with employers create opportunities for their clients. Yet PP Project Coordinators and staff also see it as a challenge to continually promote and create greater awareness of the opportunities that exist for employers in hiring a client. Furthermore, it is a challenge to find employers that are willing to focus on the individual's abilities as opposed to disabilities.

Project Coordinators and staff's experience has shown that it is highly beneficial to provide on-going support to both employers and the people with disabilities working for them. Yet in the working world, tasks change, circumstances change and the impact or degree of the disability may change. It is a challenge for the PPs to **ensure that the on-going support is adequate** to meet the needs of both, as it is often key to maintaining the employment arrangement.

PP staff have found that it is a challenge to improve **access to disability supports while at the same time ensuring that costs are affordable**. Some clients cannot afford the supports that can cost from $3,000 to $16,000.

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[21] HRDC, *In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada*. 2000.

[22] HRDC, *Future Directions, To Address Disability Issues for the Government of Canada: Working Together for Full Citizenship*, 1999, pg. 10.

A related issue is the fact that supports are frequently tied to eligibility for income support or other programs. In other words, supports provided for use at home cannot be used in school or work and likewise, accommodations in the workplace cannot be brought home. **Supports are generally not portable**. Statistics from the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) suggest that 33% of adults with a disability cover support costs associated with a disability and are not reimbursed by either a public or private plan.[23]

One of greatest challenges for people with disabilities is finding a job that provides enough hours of work at a salary high enough to achieve economic independence. For those who find a job, education is the most important determinant of earnings. **People with disabilities with higher levels of education are more likely to have work-related training and be employed** in some of the more lucrative occupations.[24] Project Coordinators and staff stress that education, training and transition programs must be flexible and accessible to ensure better educational attainment and as a result, a better economic future through employment.

All PPs have some criteria for whether or not their program is suitable for clients who are either referred to the program or who approach the program themselves. It is a challenge for PPs to make sure that there is flexibility in their selection criteria while being cognizant of the fact that not all clients may be likely to benefit from their services. According to Project Coordinators and staff, this **up-front screening is important to the success of the program**.

Please note that this report does not make a distinction between women and men in the analysis. The reason for this is that the Promising Practices visited do not focus exclusively on either gender and few have programs that are targeted at only women or only men. The research findings therefore pertain to both women and men. However, the literature review revealed that women and men are affected in different ways and to different degrees by the same challenges. In fact, statistics show that **women with disabilities have one of the lowest rates of labour force participation and one of the highest rates of poverty**.[25] This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as double disadvantage, i.e., a person is a member of two groups that are both at a disadvantage in the labour market.

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[23] http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/documents/taskForce/english/report/index.html#toc

[24] Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disabilities in Canada: An economic portrait*, HRDC, Office for Disability Issues, 1996.

[25] This is based on the 1996 Census. Poverty is measured using the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-offs (LICO). The Low Income cut-offs are based on family income and adjusted according to family size and the community in which they live. Persons with family incomes that are below the cut-off are defined as living in "straitened circumstances".

3.2 Challenges Specific to Rural and Mid-Range Communities

Canada's communities are spread across vast geographic regions. In rural areas, it is a challenge for employment and employability services organizations to cover the distances to reach the target population for the purposes of promoting awareness of available programs, supports and opportunities.

Many Aboriginal communities are dispersed geographically. According to Project Coordinators (i.e., THEO and CCI), **PPs have limited resources and do not have the capacity to perform outreach in distant communities.** As with any partnership, trust needs to be established before the working relationship can be effective.

Transportation is a huge challenge in rural areas and mentioned as an issue by all those interviewed who live and operate in such areas. **Lack of transportation can prevent people with disabilities from accessing programs, educational institutions and employment**. Other challenges associated with rural areas include limited access to housing, health and wellness facilities, and support groups. [26]

In rural areas, **lack of employment opportunities** adds to the challenges faced. Rural communities often have seasonal employment opportunities rather than more stable year-round employment. Adequate training opportunities and technical support are also often lacking. It has been noted that in such areas, there may also be a lack of adequate funding to increase supported employment.[27]

3.3 Specific Challenges for People with Different Types of Disabilities

Similar barriers and challenges to employment affect all people with disabilities. However, they are not always affected in the same way or to the same degree. The type of disability one has also appears to affect one's employment status. Figure 3.1 shows that in 1991, those with mental or psychiatric disabilities were the most likely of all people with disabilities to be unemployed. Those with agility, mobility and verbal impairments also had higher unemployment rates than persons with sight or hearing impairments.[28] It should be noted that the figure below does not specifically categorize people with addictions.

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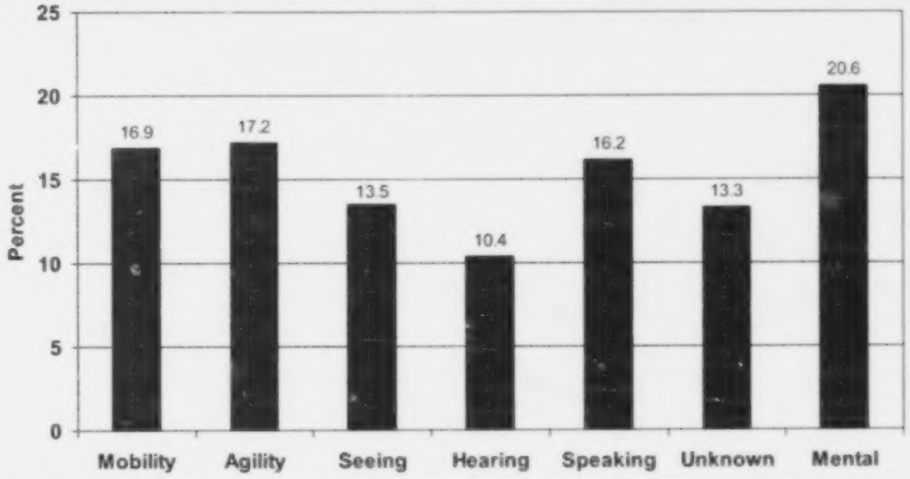
[26] Research and Training Center (RTC), *Developing Innovative Solutions for Rural Americans with Disabilities*, http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/rtcrural/

[27] Research and Training Center (RTC), *Developing Innovative Solutions for Rural Americans with Disabilities*, http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/rtcrural/

[28] The most recent data from HALS is 1991. However, the 2001 Census collected information about people who have activity limitations at home, school, work or in other aspects of their lives, such as travel or recreation. As in both the 1986 and 1991 Censuses, information gathered in 2001 will be used to identify respondents for a post-censal survey. The survey has been replaced by the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Information from the survey will not be available until around 2003. http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/2001/population/content.htm

Figure 3.1
Unemployment Rates of Persons with Disabilities[1] by Disability Type, 1991



Source: Statistics Canada (1991 HALS Data)

[1] The term "persons with disabilities" (as opposed to "people with disabilities") is only used in this report if it appeared in the original source documents.

The PPs studied collectively serve people with all types of disabilities, although some specialize in certain disabilities. Table 3.2 below shows an overview of the key challenges for each of the disability groups and some of the programming and service solutions used by the PPs to address the specific issues. People with disabilities often have an issue around self-confidence, but how this is best addressed, according to Project Coordinators, depends on the type of disability.

Table 3.2
Overview of Key Challenges and What Works Well[29]

	Key Findings of What Works Well								
Disability Type and Related Challenges	**Comprehensive Assessments**	**Work Readiness & Skills Training**	**Knowledgeable Staff**	**Employer Education**	**Adaptive Technology**	**Job Placements**	**Job Coaching**	**Flexible Work Arrangements**	**On-going Support**
Psychiatric Disabilities (Mental)									
Low self-esteem and confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of knowledge of personal strengths and limitations	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Stigmas in the workplace		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Negative side-effects of medication	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓
Cyclical nature of the disability	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical Disabilities (Mobility, Agility)									
Physical limitations (e.g. fatigue, stamina)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of access to adaptive technology and accommodations	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Low self-esteem and confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Negative attitudes and perceptions		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Learning Disabilities									
Significant learning curve	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of confidence and self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
General lack of awareness about the disability			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Sensory Disabilities (Seeing, Hearing, Speaking)									
Lack of knowledge of and access to accommodations and adaptive technology	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Negative attitudes and perceptions		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Lack of confidence and self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Developmental or Intellectual Disabilities									
Lack of confidence and self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incorrect perceptions and myths about developmental disabilities			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Addictions									
Lack of self-confidence	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Complex personal issues	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of basic living skills and routine	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Non-Visible Disabilities (Environmental Sensitivities, Depression)									
Lack of understanding about the disability			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of support groups	✓	✓	✓						✓
Lack of confidence and self-esteem	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

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[29] The information presented in this table includes only the findings from the site visits to the nine EAPD Promising Practices.

4. What Works Well in EAPD Promising Practices

Based upon the findings from both the literature review and the review of the Promising Practices, this section describes the things that work well in employability programming for people with disabilities. The section begins by describing processes used by PPs to serve their client groups. It is important to note that the PPs visited are highly diverse and that this discussion pertains to processes common to most PPs.

4.1 Client Service Process

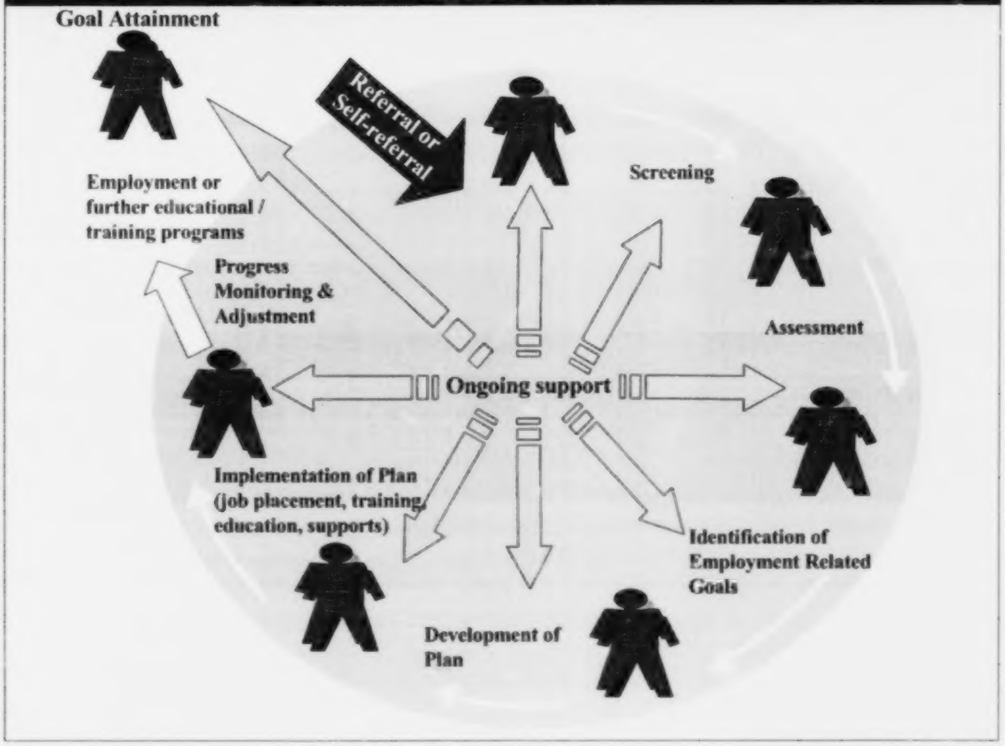
The client service process can be a complicated, multi-faceted process. The whole process from intake to exit or goal attainment could potentially involve a variety of service providers at one or more stages in the process (i.e. rehabilitation practitioners, intake workers, counsellors/case managers, assessment specialists, employer relations personnel, etc.). Moreover, it is common for additional services or programs to be utilized sequentially and/or simultaneously to assist a client. The extent to which these providers are involved in the process depends upon the specific barriers to employment that the individual client may face, the type and severity of the disability and the program and/or service interventions that are needed to help.

The key steps and processes in serving clients are as follows:

- Referral or self-referral;
- Screening;
- Assessment;
- Identification of employment related goals;
- Development of plan;
- Implementation of plan, including employment or further educational/training programs;
- Progress monitoring and adjustment; and
- Goal attainment.

Figure 4.1 depicts these processes, which are discussed in greater detail below.

Figure 4.1
Client Service Process


Goal Attainment
Referral or Self-referral
Screening
Employment or further educational / training programs
Progress Monitoring & Adjustment
Assessment
Ongoing support
Implementation of Plan (job placement, training, education, supports)
Identification of Employment Related Goals
Development of Plan

Clients are often **referred to the PP through either their health or rehabilitation practitioners**. In some cases, potential clients may have heard about the program through their friends who are former clients, and approach the PP on their own. Potential clients attending a university or college may have been referred to a PP by a counsellor in these institutions.

The first stages in the process (as displayed in Figure 4.1) are the **screening and assessment** of applicants. These activities (especially the assessment part) often take time. The assessment of a client is a key stage as it lays the foundation for understanding what kinds of services and programs individual clients need in order to make progress towards employment.

Once the assessment has taken place, counsellors help clients **identify employment related goals**. At this point, clients have a better sense of their strengths, abilities, desires and limitations, which facilitates the **development of a plan of action**. Once this **plan is implemented**, clients start moving forward. The implementation stage often involves enrolling in courses, skills enhancement, job placements and other services required to increase a client's employability.

Next, there is a **monitoring of the progress** to date and possibly an adjustment to the initial plan. Clients may then pursue **further education or skills training, start looking for work or enter the workforce.**

On-going support is the core foundation of success for each of these stages. It is extremely valuable for clients - even for those who have been working or studying for a significant period of time - to know that they can obtain the assistance and support they need if any issues or concerns arise. Many clients shared that they would not have been successful without this on-going support.

It should be noted that success in any one stage is highly dependent upon the results from the previous stages. For example, the formulation of goals depends on the program's ability to assess a person's strengths, abilities and limitations accurately.

4.2 Reducing Attitudinal and Perception Barriers

Negative perceptions of and attitudes towards people with disabilities are described in the literature as the most significant barriers towards the full participation of people with disabilities' in the labour market. Such attitudinal barriers usually come as a result of a lack of understanding and awareness of what disabilities are about.[30]

This lack of public awareness about disabilities and disability issues is also sometimes referred to in the literature as societal barriers.[31] Also grounded in negative perceptions, societal barriers often exclude people with disabilities from decisions about things that affect them. These individuals are often blamed for the consequences of their disabilities when the causes of inequity should be looked for in the social environment. For example, some adults with learning disabilities are conditioned to believe they are incompetent, lazy and lack the ability to function normally in society.[32] It is also a function of this barrier that highly visible disabilities often hide the true abilities of a person.[33]

It is suggested in the literature that negative perceptions towards people with disabilities exacerbate the systemic barriers affecting them.[34] These negative attitudes potentially limit opportunities for employment; therefore, it is necessary for stereotypes to be broken down and to focus on the *abilities* of people with disabilities. Government bodies and community organizations have a responsibility to enforce this positive attitude in support of promoting what people with disabilities can bring to the community.

> *"I always leave here feeling better than I was when I got here. I don't really have anywhere else to go to get this feeling."* Promising Practice client

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[30] HRDC, *Future Directions, To Address Disability Issues for the Government of Canada: Working Together for Full Citizenship*, 1999.

[31] Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, http://www.ldac-taac.ca/

[32] *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act Federal Task Force on Disability Issues*, 1996, Chapter 5, pg. 1.

[33] Bunch and Crawford, *Persons with Disabilities: Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*. June 1998, p.33.

[34] Bunch and Crawford, *Persons with Disabilities: Literature Review of the Factors Affecting Employment and Labour Force Transitions*. June 1998, p.33.

According to PP clients, former clients and clients' family members, public attitudes and prejudices impact an individual's self-esteem. Low self-esteem generally leads to a lack of confidence, preventing good performance during job interviews, for example.

Promising Practices work on breaking down these barriers. The fact that they are funded through EAPD signals governments' commitment to address both societal and perceptual barriers. The PPs do community awareness raising to address attitudinal and perception barriers, while their programs and services give clients tools to deal with negativity both from the outside and from within.

> *"It is important to provide the right opportunities to prevent failure. An employer must pay attention to any fears or misunderstandings and deal with these right away. Also, it is important to manage other employees so that they feel comfortable."* Employer

According to Project Coordinators, programs must be highly focused on the client if barriers and challenges are to be addressed realistically. The PPs reviewed in this report are exemplary in assessing the needs of people with all types and degrees of disability. Each PP uses an individualized, unique, tailored or customized approach to assisting their clients. Although the assessments vary for each PP according to the service offered, the PP study found that much emphasis was placed on the value of assessing clients' needs, aspirations and limitations. **Client centered services assist individuals in taking responsibility for their future, which in turn increases self-esteem and confidence levels.** This is an important first step in the process of overcoming many of the attitudinal and societal barriers to employability.

> *"Barriers and attitudes towards people with disabilities still exist. It requires extra effort and time by employers to deal with it. I created (adapted) five positions for people with disabilities. Not all employers see it as an opportunity to hire people with disabilities."* Employer

Community-based employment or job placements are highly successful in allowing people with disabilities greater exposure to a range of employment opportunities according to clients, former clients, Project Coordinators and staff. Unlike "sheltered workshop" models, **community-based employment** gives individuals a chance to develop employability skills within realistic employment environments. This approach also **allows clients, employers and other employees a chance to break down attitudinal and perception barriers** and create a productive place for people with disabilities in society.

> *"We have had great success with their clients. It is mutually beneficial to have them come for their job placement portion of the program: they get experience; we get work done that otherwise would not be done. These clients want to be there, they are enthusiastic, they have some skills that can be applied here and many of them are mature. We have hired two clients after their placements in our organization."* Employer

In order to deal with perceptional barriers up front, PPs often make on-site facilitators or job-coaches available to employers who are providing employment or job-placements to clients. Employers find this highly useful as it gives them an opportunity to learn how to create a supportive environment. Clients as well are highly satisfied with this arrangement as it makes them feel safer asking questions or requesting clarifications. In addition, it provides an opportunity for clients to learn at their own pace and it gives the employer a sense of comfort knowing that the individual is being trained adequately. Facilitators and coaches also help educate people in the workplace about people with disabilities, thereby reducing negative perceptions.

Staff in the Promising Practices that conduct **long-term follow-up and provide continued support for both clients and employers also feel they have been successful in breaking down the societal barriers**. They are able to address a lack of awareness by employers about the disabilities themselves and help employers see how people with disabilities can contribute in a positive way to the company as well as to Canadian society in general.

Many clients entering the PPs' programs come with complex issues. These issues include unstable housing, family responsibilities, medical limitations, side-effects of required medication, interpersonal skills and behaviours, addictions, technological needs as well as personal likes and dislikes. From the PPs' perspective, this requires a client to be looked at in a holistic way. It is also an approach that is highly valuable to their clients.

> *"Daily routine, doing work activities taught me skills that I need to be independent. I feel more confident in myself, which helps me look for a job, and to keep trying if one doesn't work out."* Promising Practice client

4.3 Reducing Environmental Barriers

People with disabilities were guaranteed equality under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1986. Full citizenship is exercised when barriers that significantly reduce the ability to participate in the community are eliminated.[35]

Environmental barriers refer to barriers that exist in the working environment itself.[36] The literature shows that many people with disabilities are outside the labour force, not because their disability prevents them from working, but because the labour market operates in an environment that produces barriers. In other words, the work environment, the broader policy and program environment and the pace of work create barriers and disincentives. The lack of available accommodations and support is regarded as a major environmental barrier.[37]

> *"An employer needs to be flexible to fit clients' schedule. They start off three days a week and they can set their own hours. And then you ease them into full-time level."* Employer

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[35] Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issue. A Vision Paper*, 1998, pp.14.

[36] Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disabilities in Canada: An economic portrait*, HRDC, Office for Disability Issues, 1996

[37] Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disabilities in Canada: An economic portrait*, HRDC, Office for Disability Issues, 1996.

Furthermore, support services that enable people with disabilities to enter and remain in the workforce are often not coordinated to adequately meet the needs of each individual. These support services include income support bridge, transportation, training, and other disability-related supports and services.[38]

Most complaints made to the Canadian Human Rights Commission by people with disabilities relate to a failure by employers to accommodate their needs. Amendments to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (*CHR Act)* included a message to employers and organizations: *"people with disabilities are full members of society. If accommodation is necessary for them to participate equally, it must be provided."*[39] While this appeals to the social responsibility of employers, providing accommodation also represents a cost to employers. While the literature reviewed for the purposes of this report did not provide information related to the impact of this amendment to the *CHR Act*, it is possible that the costs as well as employers' lack of awareness of programs to cover accommodations costs in part or in full, may run the risk of acting as a deterrent to hiring people with disabilities.

> *"More employers need to be made aware of the adaptive technologies and their potential for positive results in the workplace."* Employer

The Project Coordinators of the Promising Practices visited for this study recognize the importance of **educating employers about supports that are available to them and how they can obtain them**. Creating awareness is a critical factor in overcoming environmental barriers.

People with disabilities have varying characteristics and needs. Because these various needs are unique to each individual, Project Coordinators noted that **it is important for support structures – at the workplace and at home – to not only be adaptable for the day-to-day activities of people with disabilities, but to also be portable to follow the person as they move from one job to another.** Most people with disabilities that are served by the PPs can live independently and participate in the community, when they have the supports they need.

Due to the holistic approach adopted by all nine PPs, staff make every effort to **assist people with disabilities obtain the accommodations and supports required that would enable them to function independently and compete on an even ground in the labour market**. Each PP addresses this barrier in a different way depending on the type of service provided. All programs assess the individual needs of the client. In order to address environmental barriers, many programs have developed close relationships with government programs to assist in providing such accommodations (i.e., ASP, THEO and CCI). Some programs (i.e., THEO and CCI) conduct a task analysis in the workplace to determine the "real" needs of the individual.

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[38] Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disabilities in Canada: An economic portrait*, HRDC, Office for Disability Issues, 1996.

[39] Canadian Human Rights Commission, *Annual Report*, 1998, pp. 22.

Some government programs in Canada (i.e., Manitoba Health Home Care Program and Alberta's Persons with Developmental Disabilities Initiatives) provide supports through self-managed funding where clients are given the opportunity to manage their own supports, such as hiring attendant services. This is intended to foster greater independence for people with disabilities. This practice has effectively demonstrated the importance of strong partnerships among the federal and provincial governments, community organizations, employers, learning institutions and people with disabilities. However, because eligibility for disability supports is linked with eligibility for other programs, many people with disabilities are ineligible for some supports they require. De-linking disability supports from eligibility for other programs may address this issue.[40]

> *"While having the equipment is definitely nice to have, having your needs addressed on an individual basis is of much more value. They made me feel good about my situation and about myself."*
> Promising Practice client

Establishing adaptive aids "loan banks" is an approach that appears to work well. These **loan banks enable clients to exchange equipment and experiment with technological options in the event that the client's disability or her/his tasks change**. ASP, the PP with a loan bank, assesses technology needs on an individual basis, provides the required training and support, and evaluates success on an on-going basis. The Project Coordinator and staff stress that the individualized approach ensures a good match between the person's needs and the technology required. Such initiatives have been highly effective in reducing accommodation related barriers in both employment settings as well as educational settings according to clients, former clients and PP Project Coordinator and staff.

One PP visited for this study (THEO) has taken **the approach of linking the adaptive aid to the client rather than to the employer**. For example, the PP asks the employer to purchase the aid in the client's name and the employer is then reimbursed by a government funding agency. The advantage is that the individual has a greater degree of independence when trying to change jobs. It also reduces costs in that the subsequent employers do not need to purchase or make arrangements for aids. THEO reports it has proven to be an effective means of reducing accommodation barriers in the workplace.

Interviews with PP clients and the literature review indicate that both men and women with disabilities report fatigue as a result of having a disability and associated difficulties when performing what are considered routine tasks.[41] These in themselves are barriers. Some tasks require significant amounts of time and energy to complete, or are beyond the client's capability. **Provision of adequate supports such as washroom accessibility, flexible transportation, affordable child care and coordinated transportation systems between childcare and the workplace reduce the fatigue experienced by people with disabilities.** This in turn leaves them with more energy to look for or maintain employment.

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[40] HRDC, *Lessons Learned: Disability Policies and Programs*, Final Report and Technical Report, October 1997, pp.3.

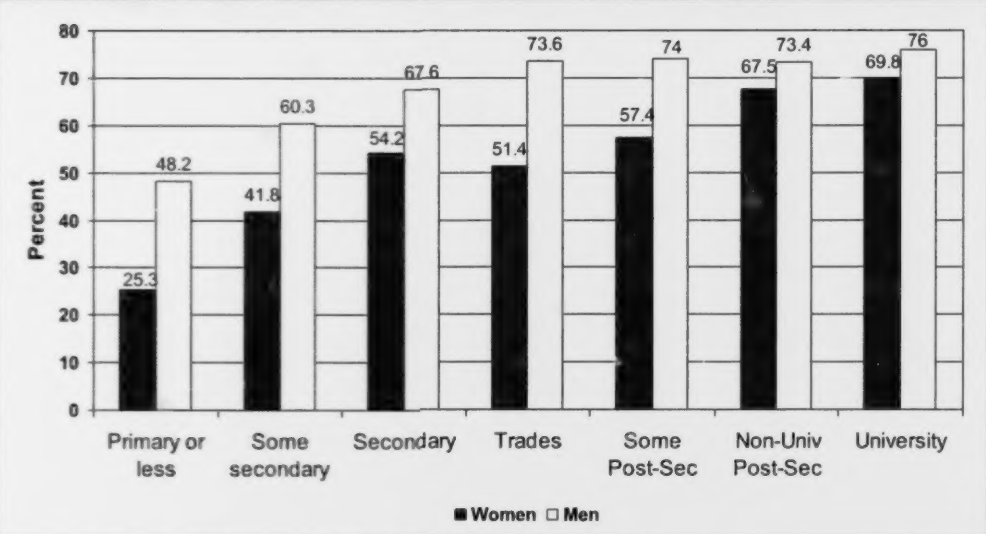
[41] Gail Fawcett, *Bringing Down the Barriers: The Labour Market and Women with Disabilities in Ontario.* http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2000/wd/sect2b.htm

4.4 Reducing Educational Barriers

Higher education appears to be one of the most valuable mechanisms available to reduce the difficulty people with disabilities face in trying to get into and stay in the paid labour market. Increases in educational attainment of working-age people with disabilities (between 1986-1991) may be responsible for about a third of the overall increase in their labour force participation during that period (the increase in government initiatives and awareness of the "disability movement" have also added to an increase in the representation of people with disabilities in the labour force).[42]

The role of education in assisting people with disabilities in trying to get into and stay in the paid labour market cannot be over-emphasized. In looking at HALS statistics, the higher the level of education, the greater the chance of labour force participation. Figure 4.2 below captures this trend. It is noteworthy that women with disabilities are under-represented in the labour force compared to men with disabilities regardless of level of education. However, the difference is less for those with post-secondary education. While education is key to opportunity, PP staff and Provincial representatives interviewed for this study recognize that the severity of disability also affects the chances of labour force participation.

Figure 4.2
Labour Force Participation Rates of Women and Men with Disabilities by Highest Level of Education, 1991



Source: Statistics Canada (1991 HALS Data)

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[42] Gail Fawcett, *Living with Disabilities in Canada: An economic portrait*, HRDC, Office for Disability Issues, 1996.

There is a debate among experts in the field of vocational and educational supports for people with mental illness as to whether a person with a disability should be trained or educated before finding employment or whether results are acquired faster by a person with a disability getting a job first, and then learning on the job.[43] For people with psychiatric disabilities, employment seems to have many benefits above and beyond the more immediate financial and personal rewards. Research indicates that employment often results in improvements in psychiatric symptoms, reduced hospitalization, lower levels of anxiety and overall improvement in quality of life and sociability for these clients. The place-train approach is promising in that it may produce the desired results faster than pre-employment programs. However, with the great diversity in this client group, both approaches are probably beneficial and depend on the individual. It is also acknowledged by these experts that the place-train model may also only work for some jobs, usually entry-level positions.[44]

According to Project Coordinators, many people with disabilities have few or no marketable skills upon entering employability programs. In some cases, their skills may be outdated or no longer relevant due to a recently acquired or progressive disability. **Programs designed to teach the "basics" are highly beneficial. Literacy skills, computer skills, life skills, inter-personal skills and job-readiness skills are essential to successful integration into the work force.** The clients interviewed for this study appreciated these skills a great deal. A few had never gone to a job interview before, and being coached through the process was a most beneficial learning experience.

Some clients identify employment goals that require a diploma or degree at a college or a university. The PPs will often help these clients access funding or adaptive aids as well as lend support through the application process. Whether a client gets employment or is accepted at an educational institution, Project Coordinators and staff regard both outcomes as successful. This is based on a belief that in a knowledge-based economy, having an education is essential for success in the labour market. Again, as Figure 4-2 above shows, the more education a person with disabilities has, the greater the possibility for participation in the labour force.

Thus, **improving access to education, supports and adaptive aids is a successful approach to increasing the education levels of people with disabilities**. Several of the PPs operate "loan banks" of technological aids. Their focus is primarily on people with disabilities who need technological support to enhance their education. Another key element of facilitating access to education is the partnership and communication between Promising Practices and the educational institutions. According to Project Coordinators and other staff, this bridge provides invaluable support for clients who desire to move on.

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[43] British Columbia Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. *B.C.'s Mental Health Reform. Best Practices for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery*. n.d.

[44] British Columbia Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors. *B.C.'s Mental Health Reform. Best Practices for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery*. n.d.

4.5 Reducing Financial Disincentives

Systemic disincentives are also considered barriers in the literature in that people with disabilities are often penalized for entering or returning to the workforce.[45] They may lose income support, support for assistive devices, medications, transportation, etc. Often they are employed in low-wage jobs. Eligibility requirements of some income systems (i.e., Canada Pension Plan and welfare systems) are such that a person must be considered "unemployable" to receive assistance. This becomes a barrier when those who are capable of working to some degree do not for fear of losing a safety net (also referred to as the "welfare trap").[46]

While the review of the Promising Practices did not focus on financial disincentives, the report makes the following observations.

1. For example, some income support programs exempt a portion of wage earnings allowing people with disabilities to financially benefit from making the transition to work. Clients interviewed saw this as beneficial as it allowed them the opportunity to "try things out" without the fear of losing benefits. **Some clients saw this as an incentive to work**, even if the amount allowed was minimal. Clients and former clients pointed out that even a modest job has a significant motivational impact on a person with disabilities. Being productive increases an individual's self-esteem and confidence and creates a desire for independence and self-sufficiency.

> *"You can teach people the hard skills, but you can't teach people the attitude. That's why job placements are so important".* Employer

2. Lack of adequate transportation is a major barrier for many people with disabilities. While this is a particularly difficult challenge in rural areas, it also exists in urban areas. Interviews with clients, employers and staff in all PPs revealed that availability, access and costs of transportation are issues in terms of participation in programs as well as studying and being employed. Some PPs in urban areas (i.e., GVS, POLARIS) provide clients with a public transit (bus) pass to allow them to participate in the programs offered. Clients in rural areas tend to rely on friends and family to provide transportation.

3. Accommodations and access to adaptive technologies represent a challenge for both people with disabilities as well as employers. **Linking portable accommodations and aids to the individual rather than the program has been a successful approach, according to PPs such as THEO and ASP. This reduces costs for employers who would like to hire people with disabilities, thereby breaking down the barrier of financial disincentives.** It has the added benefit of providing the individual with flexibility to transition from one job to another without the fear of losing supports.

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[45] Federal Task Force on Disability Issues, *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act*, 1996, http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sdd-dds/odi/documents/taskForce/english/report/

[46] Gail Fawcett, PhD, *Living with Disability in Canada: An Economic Portrait*, 1996, pp. 136.

4. Volunteer work is beneficial in that it allows clients a chance to enhance their skills and gain experience. Just like paid employment, PP clients noted that volunteer work has the potential to increase an individual's self-esteem and confidence. However, volunteer work is not paid work and generally does not hold the promise of greater financial independence. It is important PPs do not lose sight of the importance of paid employment for clients.

5. Promising Practices are helping people with disabilities prepare for, find and maintain employment. The positions that many find in the workplace, however, are often entry-level. It is recognized by Project Coordinators and staff that gaining experience at this level is an essential first step. They also recognize that entry-level positions are usually paid minimally and consist of repetitious tasks. Helping clients get such jobs is beneficial from the point of view that they get experience and start off doing tasks that are not too demanding or challenging. However, for those that are capable of more, these positions are not particularly interesting and low wage positions are a disincentive as they do little to change an individual's lifestyle, housing situation etc. **There is still a challenge to incorporate people with disabilities into higher level and more highly paid positions.**

4.6 Essential Services for Success

The above discussion presented an overview of how the Promising Practices deal with specific types of barriers. This section provides an overview of what each PP visited does for their clients. Specifically, the following table (Table 4.1) highlights the services or features that those interviewed considered essential for client success. The PPs are highly diverse in terms of the clients they serve and the approach they take. As a result, what is essential in one Practice may not be essential in another.

The PPs' success in providing employability and employment related services to their clients is in large part based on an extensive network of partners. For example, in addition to employers who create employment opportunities, PPs work in partnership with all orders of government. They partner with agencies providing complementary services and financial assistance to people with disabilities. PPs work with medical professionals who are caring for their individual clients as well as educational institutions. Other partners include clients' family members and the community of people with disabilities, who often serve on boards and committees, providing expert advice and advocacy services.

The Promising Practices identified the following services as essential for success.

Table 4.1
Essential Services for Success

PP Name	Target Group	Essential Services for Success
Gastown Vocational Services, BC	People with severe mental health disabilities	• Psychological and vocational assessments • Job placements as soon as possible after work readiness programs • On-going support • Partnerships with employers, funders, educational institutions and other employment service providers • Communications with all GVS staff, clients' mental health team and family members
Co-ordination of Transition from High School to Skills Training (POLARIS), BC	People with developmental disabilities	• Addressing issues as soon as they come up to maximize clients' retention of learning • Support and patience from all parties involved • Consistent messages from all parties involved • Partnerships with employers in the clients' community to enhance comfort ability and self-confidence • One-on-one instruction
Adult Services Program, BC	People with all types of disabilities	• Needs assessments and development of a plan • Partnerships with educational institutions, referral agents and funders • Provision of technology and repair services as efficiently as possible • Provision of up-to-date technologies that are compatible with existing systems • Evaluation of new technologies as they enter the market
Kamloops Avenues to Capturing Employment Program /THEO BC, BC	People with all types of disabilities	• Individualized services and employment plans • Supporting clients to take on the responsibility of accomplishing tasks on their own • Offering resume development and job skills workshops on a regular basis • Setting up a process to ensure that the adaptive aid follows the person rather than the employer • Improvement and learning of community relevant skills in a training facility setting
Behavioural Health Foundation, MB	People with addictions and their spouses and dependent children	• A holistic approach to addictions programming where clients explore and address underlying issues while developing general life skills, improving educational levels and increasing opportunities for employment so that they are in a better position to find and retain employment • Childcare services on site to allow adults to take full advantage of the programs offered • Opportunities to develop social and inter-personal skills, and thereby a positive self-image • Gradual approach to enable clients to take on more responsibility and authority to make decisions • Support programs such as counselling, employment readiness groups, follow-up support, educational and training opportunities and transitional support (i.e., transition houses) • Consideration of clients' strengths and limitations in education and employment options

Table 4.1 (cont'd)
Essential Services for Success

Career Connections Inc., MB	People with all types of disabilities	• An assessment tool (System 2000) to match abilities, skills, likes and dislikes with employment opportunities • Training and counselling in career planning, job search strategies and effective communications • Interpersonal skills courses to enable clients to build positive relationships and become more assertive • Life skills courses for successful integration into society • On-the-job training • On-going follow-up support for both clients and employers • Participation in community events
Visible Abilities Registry, NB	People with all types of disabilities	• Good relationship with all stakeholders to ensure that the registry is successful • Maintaining and updating the information in the registry on a regular basis • Recruiting new clients and employers on a continuous basis • Developing good relationships with registrants • Sharing VA registrants' success stories to raise awareness among potential clients and employers
Assessment of EAPD applicants with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), NS	People with learning disabilities	• Good relationships with elementary/high schools and the Department of Community Services to have complete client documentation • Staff knowledgeable about learning disabilities and comfortable using the interview process • Communication between the Department of Community Services and Department of Education to follow up on the files passed on to the Department of Education for education funding
Networking Employment Opportunities NOW, PEI	People with all types of disabilities	• Close relationship between all NEON committee members to best assist clients in their employment and training pursuits • Community awareness activities and promotion of the contributions people with disabilities can make to the community and employers • Networking with employers as well as educating employers

5. Conclusions

This report highlights linkages between literature on employability and employment programming for people with disabilities and the work performed by nine Promising Practices in five Canadian provinces. This final section of the report summarizes the overall findings from the research.

All nine Promising Practices are **highly client focused**. The basis for their success and high client satisfaction come from the fact that programs are flexible or tailored to the needs of each individual. This allows clients to enhance their learning and employment preparations. Employment or educational plans are created according to each client's abilities and limitations. Client centered services also tend to raise clients' self-esteem and confidence, an issue for all clients interviewed for this study.

All nine PPs look at their clients in a **holistic** way. They consider a person's likes and dislikes, abilities and limitations, housing and family situations, technological needs for school and work, and social and interpersonal skills. Clients appreciate this approach. The approach also allows for trust between the client and the Promising Practice.

All nine PPs recognize the **importance of education and/or on-the-job training** as a starting point in clients' employment pursuits. Many clients have few or no marketable skills. Others have skills that are outdated. Yet others have skills that they are no longer able to use as a result of a disability. Literature demonstrates that education is key to employment and level of income. Also, it shows that the nature of work is changing. As a result, initiatives to encourage people with disabilities to further their education and develop their skills are essential to their acquiring gainful employment.

Staff in all PPs mentioned **educating and raising awareness of employers** and the general public on the value that people with disabilities bring to our society and workplaces as highly important. Employers interviewed for the purpose of this study indicated that they knew very little about disabilities and accommodations before they entered into a partnership with a Promising Practice. Many staff members as well as the employers themselves indicated that educating employers is one of the most important activities to undertake for the purpose of increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the general workforce.

Staff in the PPs emphasized **partnerships with employers** as one of the most important tools to allow clients a chance to get a job placement as well as increasing their chances of employment after the placement. Employers interviewed for this study were mostly employers who had opened their doors for a job placement. In several cases, employers hired the client upon the completion of their placements. In other cases, when employers did not have the resources to hire anyone, they sometimes extended offers of volunteer work placements.

According to PP staff and their clients, **volunteer work** is valuable in that it allows clients a chance to enhance their skills and to build their resumes. Yet, volunteer work is not paid work and, in many cases, does not hold the promise of greater financial independence and getting off social assistance. As such, the focus should be to enter into partnerships with employers to balance clients' needs for work experience and skills enhancement with opportunities that have a chance of leading to permanent employment, and finding employment that pays more than minimum wage.

PPs that have work placements as part of their programs **facilitate on-going communication that assists both employers and clients** for the duration of the placement. Meetings and open lines of communication between Promising Practice staff, employer and client are instrumental in helping all parties understand what they can and cannot do. For example, employers may have certain work-related requirements that a client cannot meet. Clients and employers alike value this three-way communication as it provides both parties a point of contact to discuss issues that arise. Employers interviewed for this study indicated that this support is often a catalyst for them to provide job placement opportunities for PP clients.

The PPs reported having **highly dedicated and committed leadership and staff**. Staff are the backbone of these organizations. All PPs stressed the importance of getting to know their clients well in order to provide the individual services clients need. Their ability to develop client trust impacts on both the success of the programs as well as the employment opportunities the programs facilitate. Staff are highly knowledgeable about employability issues as they pertain to people with disabilities and see it as essential to be up-to-date on the latest approaches, methods and research to be able to continue providing the best services possible.

The PPs straddle the line between **being supportive and challenging** in their interactions with their clients. PP staff indicated that it is important to allow clients to make their own decisions (i.e., they are allowed to make their own mistakes) and assume certain responsibilities (i.e., showing up on time to courses and work placements). Some Promising Practices, such as Gastown Vocational Services, give clients two or three chances and if they still do not meet the expectations, they may be asked to come back to the program at a later time when they have addressed their issues and are ready to engage fully with the program. Others, such as the Behavioural Health Foundation, have a zero tolerance policy in place when it comes to any addictive substances. At the same time, support is given generously when needed, and assistance is provided to help clients graduate to greater levels of responsibilities and decision-making.

The Promising Practices have produced positive results. **Clients' satisfaction with the service provided** by the Promising Practices is high. Some clients are in the process realizing their dreams of fully participating in society. For other clients, the Promising Practices offer the first rays of hope that they too can achieve their dreams.

There have also been positive results in terms of the number of individuals who became employed after graduating from a Promising Practice program (Appendix A features PP templates that outline their respective qualitative and quantitative results). Some Promising Practices are collaborating with federal and/or provincial governments to offer **wage subsidies for employers**. These financial incentives often make it more feasible for employers to provide job placements and allow for financial flexibility when taking on clients who may need a longer training period. Another factor that must be taken into account when talking about results and sustainability of results is that most disabilities are permanent and many are characterized by periods when the disability is more intense or debilitating.

Each of the nine Promising Practices can be defined as a creative or innovative employment focused project or service that has demonstrated solid performance or has demonstrated potential to achieve high levels of performance in meeting its employability objectives for people with disabilities.

Appendix A: Promising Practices Templates

EAPD[47] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Adult Services Program (ASP)
Program/Service Contact:	Gladys Loewen 112 - 1750 West 75th Ave Vancouver, BC V6P 6G2 Phone: 604 264-8295 Fax: 604 263-2267 E-mail: gloewen@aspbc.org http://www.aspbc.org/index.htm
Target Group:	Adults with disabilities who are public post-secondary students or participants referred by Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) of the Ministry of Human Resources who are entering private training or employment situations.
Delivery Agent:	Adult Services Program provides direct service in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and contracts with the six Special Education Technology BC (SET-BC) Regional Centres in BC for regional service (SET-BC delivers services to K-12 students in the province).
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 11th and 12th, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- The Adult Services Program (ASP) conducts assessments of technological needs to increase access to training and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. ASP then provides the loan of adaptive technology, training, repair, and ongoing support in the use of the technologies.
- Service delivery and expertise is available throughout the province of BC - even in small communities.
- The complete range of services provided by ASP is not duplicated elsewhere in the province. Without their services, many of the educational and vocational needs of adults within its mandate would go unmet.

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[47] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

Highlights:

- In addition to providing adaptive technologies to people with disabilities, ASP provides services that directly contribute to the overall effectiveness of their program. These include a review of clients' medical, audiology and psycho-educational documentation. A Collaborative Implementation Plan is developed during the initial intake process.
- ASP assists clients through technology troubleshooting, and does repairs and upgrading of hardware and/or software. The program allows clients to return, exchange and add additional equipment as required due to changes in the disability, curriculum or employment demands.
- ASP holds follow-up consultations with training institutions/employers to ensure that the technology provided to clients continues to meet the needs of those involved.

Challenges:

- ASP provides service to all disability groups. Of the new referrals in 2000-2001, 24% have visual impairments, 7% are deaf or hard of hearing, 14% have neurological disabilities, 5% have psychiatric disabilities, 10% have learning disabilities, 12% have multiple disabilities, 7% have mobility restrictions and 21% have chronic medical disabilities. ASP has met the challenge of meeting the demands of adults with a variety of disabilities who live across the province and who are working and studying in a broad range of environments by individualizing its approach.
- *It is a challenge to ensure that technology does not turn into a barrier as opposed to an enabler for people with disabilities.*
- BC has many rural communities. The challenge is to reach these communities and promote awareness of the technologies that are available.

Results:

- Program statistics as well as follow-up interviews demonstrate that the goal of the program (i.e. to enable people with disabilities to enter a post-secondary educational institution or gain employment) is being accomplished.
- A follow-up study conducted in 1999 revealed that approximately 78% of clients were either employed or still in school.
- In 2000-2001, ASP provided technology-related support and services to 473 participants in training and employment settings. Of the 473, 268 were new or re-referrals and 205 were participants who had borrowed equipment for at least part of the fiscal year.
- ASP participants report greater independence, increased access to opportunities, ease with communicating, reading and writing, and enhanced ability to compete successfully in the labour market as a result of their participation in the program.
- Providing a program that supports people with disabilities' transition between high school, post-secondary education and employment fills a critical need in British Columbia.

Costs:

- Average cost per participant is approximately $3,000. Costs vary from person to person depending on type and severity of disability and individual needs.

C. Background and Context

The creation of the Adult Services Program arose from a 1992 study by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology to examine the special technology needs of post-secondary students with physical or sensory impairments. The Adult Services Project (later renamed the Adult Services Program) was formed in 1993 as a joint project between the Ministry of Human Resources (then the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour) and Vancouver School District No. 39.

ASP was established to meet these needs by providing:

- A continuum of services from the public school system to the end of post-secondary education, including graduate training;
- An equipment loan bank;
- Expertise in the selection and maintenance of equipment; and,
- Consistency of service across the province.

ASP services are consistent with the EAPD Agreement's principles in that direct support of employability through its services is provided, preparing people with a disability for economic and labour market participation, as well as assisting them in retaining employment.

ASP provides service to all disability groups. Of the new referrals in 2000-2001, 24% have visual impairments, 7% are deaf or hard of hearing, 14% have neurological disabilities, 5% have psychiatric disabilities, 10% have learning disabilities, 12% have multiple disabilities, 7% have mobility restrictions and 21% have chronic medical disabilities.

D. The Challenge

- The changing pace of technology provides a challenge when adaptive hardware and software do not keep up with it. As a result, software conflicts occur as adaptive technologies are not always compatible with newer software.
- Every new version of software applications require greater processing speeds and larger amounts of memory than their predecessors, making such technologies obsolete within 4 years.
- Providing technology alone is insufficient. The challenge is in ensuring that clients know how to use the technology in an effective way.
- In order to be cost-effective, ASP must ensure that there is a good match between the needs of the person and the technology that is provided to them.
- It is a challenge to help people with disabilities to overcome a general fear of technology.
- It is a challenge to promote a general awareness of the technologies that are available as well the impact and benefits to be derived from the technologies.
- BC has many rural communities. Promoting awareness of the technology that is available in these communities and reaching the target population is a challenge.
- It is challenge to reach the entire target population. Some educational institutions choose not to use ASP due to perceived bureaucracy. Therefore, students attending such institutions do not have the opportunity to access ASP's technologies.
- A key challenge is to ensure that adaptive technology is provided to those who have the ultimate goal of finding employment. In many cases, students take courses for social reasons or to fulfil an eligibility requirement for another program.
- The eligibility criteria for the program is enrolment in two courses. The rationale for this is based on the belief that a person enrolled in two courses or more is doing so with the intent of finding employment upon graduation. It is challenging, however, to ensure flexibility so that people do not "fall between the cracks" should they be unable, due to their disability, to enrol in two courses. ASP will therefore consider clients with extenuating circumstances as exceptions to the rule.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

A Client satisfaction survey conducted in 1999, funded by HRDC, revealed the following results:

- Most former clients indicated that they would not be where they are today if it were not for the services they received from ASP;
- 88% felt that the adaptive equipment was useful or very useful;
- 77% felt that the consultation was useful or very useful;
- 84% agreed or strongly agreed that the technology support/equipment assisted them in graduating; and
- 66% felt that they had a better chance of getting a job as a result of receiving services from ASP.

- A follow-up study conducted in 1999 revealed that approximately 78% of clients surveyed were either employed or still in school.
- In 2000-2001, ASP provided technology-related support and services to 473 participants in training and employment settings. Of the 473, 268 were new or re-referrals and 205 were participants who had borrowed equipment for at least part of the fiscal year.
- In 1999-2000, ASP provided technology related support and services to 674 participants in training and employment settings. Of the 674, 361 were new and re-referrals and 313 were participants who had borrowed equipment for at least part of the fiscal year.
- The reduction in number of participants can be attributed to:
  - The impact of the Technology Services Support Program (TSSP) and the Canada Study Grant program as students are eligible to draw upon their services when taking only one course; and
  - The revised ASP eligibility guidelines.
- ASP spent 536 hours on individualized training and follow-up support during fiscal year 2000-2001.

Qualitative results:

- ASP participants report greater independence, increased access to opportunities, ease with communicating, reading and writing, and enhanced ability to compete successfully in the labour market.
- Providing a program that supports people with disabilities' transition between high school, post-secondary education, and employment fills a critical need in British Columbia. Analysis of the client satisfaction survey indicates that clients are better prepared to make the transition from school to work or from job to job as a result of the services provided by ASP.

The following are comments made by ASP's clients regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

"Having the aids provided by ASP not only allows me to do my job, but it puts me on a level playing field with my colleagues."

"While having the equipment is definitely nice to have, having your needs addressed on an individual basis is of much more value. ASP made me feel good about my situation and about myself."

"The staff of ASP are willing to find the best possible solution for me....unlike other programs."

"Having access to the equipment prior to actually starting to work would have helped. It would have allowed me to get up to speed as is expected by my employer."

The following are comments made by employers regarding ASP's services:

"More employers need to be made aware of the adaptive technologies and their potential for positive results in the workplace."

"Educating employers is essential to improving employability."

"The employee had the majority of skills she required when she was hired...additional skills applicable to the position were learned quickly and with relatively little difficulty."

"Employers need to know what is available, how to obtain it and what it will do for them."

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- The loaning of equipment to participants is vital as it allows users to determine the appropriateness of the loaned technology for current training or employment settings. The loan bank concept enables participants to exchange equipment and experiment with technology options in the event there are changes to the participant's disability, the job or school tasks, or the on-site equipment provided by the training institution or employer. This approach helps reduce accommodation-related barriers.
- Upon becoming a participant, a Collaborative Implementation Plan (CIP) is developed. This plan includes a needs assessment where the required services and technologies to reduce identified barriers are determined. The CIP is developed collaboratively with the participant, the referring agent, the ASP representative and other key services providers.
- ASP uses a broad range of expertise to effectively conduct needs assessments and deliver appropriate adaptive technology services to people with the target disabilities. Expertise includes: Psychologist, Learning Specialist, Special Education Teacher, Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Computer Teacher, Learning Assistance Teacher, and Bio-Medical Technician.
- ASP provides one-on-one technology training and on-going support for users. In some cases, basic computer skills need to be taught before technology training can commence. On-going support and follow-up are provided by ASP staff or referral agents to see if the equipment is working as anticipated.
- Enhancing the training component of the program would contribute to greater success.
- ASP provides adaptive technologies to PILAT (Program for Institutional Loans of Adaptive Technology). This allows students with disabilities greater access to technologies in both the Vancouver region as well as in more remote locations.
- ASP staff often travels to remote areas to provide service to an individual.
- Technology orientations are scheduled at the beginning of each educational year to allow referring agents to learn about and discuss new technology and provide this information to students who may require adaptive technologies.
- Maintaining a good relationship between ASP and the referral agents is key to reaching the target population.
- Prior to purchasing new technologies, extensive evaluations are conducted to determine the potential impact and compatibility with the technologies already in use by ASP. This process greatly contributes to the efficiency of the program.
- Enrollment in two courses is required as it is generally felt that a person enrolled in two courses is doing so with the intent of finding employment upon graduation. Depending on the circumstances, ASP will bend this rule.
- ASP donates technology that has become out of date or insufficient to meet its needs to colleges and institutions.
- Openness, honesty and communication are essential to the success of the program. Additionally, ASP strives to find the best possible technology solution for their clients and values solution over cost. This is a key success factor.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- The Collaborative Implementation Plan (CIP), including a needs assessment to identify what services and technologies are required, is essential for success.
- Open and honest partnerships with educational institutions, referral agents and funding agents are essential both in Vancouver and in the rural communities of BC. These partnerships are currently the only way of reaching the target population.
- Providing technology, and service repairs in an efficient manner is valuable to both clients and employers.
- Providing up-to-date technology that is as compatible as possible with existing technology is extremely important.
- Conducting extensive evaluations of new and updated technologies as they enter the market is essential for on-going success.
- The program must continue to provide individualized service to people with disabilities. This is essential to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- ASP must have qualified, professional staff that meet the level of expertise required to provide optimal service.
- On-going relationship building and partnerships with key people or institutions as well as employers is necessary to promote program awareness. Open and honest communication between stakeholders is essential to on-going success.
- Achieving the goal of employability requires ongoing promotion and awareness activities directed at employers. Employers need to be educated with respect to what programs are available, how they can be used and how the employer can benefit from them.
- The development of adaptive equipment is always one step behind. For example, the design and subsequent release of speech recognition programs for blind computer users generally takes six months to a year after the release of a new generation operating system. It is essential that ASP keeps up-to-date with the advances in technology and assesses the impact for users.
- Many adults have limited computer skills, which means that they cannot take full advantage of the adaptive hardware and software until their computer skills are well developed. It is essential that ASP ascertain individual abilities to ensure optimal use of the technology provided.
- Promoting and raising awareness of adaptive technology and its benefits in rural and remote areas of BC is necessary for reaching target populations in these areas.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- The Adult Services Program intends to continue collaborating with the Ministry of Advanced Education, which administers the Canada Study Grant (a federal financial aid program), to allow for long range planning and for students to access the full spectrum of technology solutions. Current practice is for post-secondary students to either purchase their own equipment if they are eligible for a grant through the Canada Study Grant, or apply to borrow equipment from ASP if they are not.
- ASP will continue to keep up-to-date with the new adaptive technologies and assess their impact on the users to find the best solution for each of their clients.
- The goal of ASP is to continue to make mainstream programming more accessible for people with disabilities.
- ASP will continue to assess clients' needs and abilities to ensure that the best possible solution is found for each individual.
- ASP is currently making modifications to their database with enhanced capabilities (i.e. relational database capabilities) that will enable them to function more efficiently.

Future Endeavours:

- Solicit additional funding to track the results from the 2000-2001 fiscal year to determine the continued success of the program. Specifically, ASP would like to find out whether the participants are employed, pursuing further training or are unemployed at the time of the study.
- Ideally, a 'common core of values' between all orders of government would improve efficiency of service to the target population. ASP will address this in the long range planning activities with the Ministry of Advanced Education.

EAPD[48] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Pilot Partnership Providing Individualized Extensive Skills Training and Supports in an Employer Worksite
Program/Service Contact:	Linda Delparte, Executive Director POLARIS Employment Services Society 205-5066 Kingsway, Burnaby BC, V5H 2E7 Telephone: (604) 430-1557 E-Mail: polaris-employment@telus.net http://www.bc.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/burnaby/common/jobsrch.html
Target Group:	Persons with developmental disabilities.
Delivery Agent:	POLARIS Employment Services Society, funded by Ministry of Children and Family Development (Supported Work Program), Ministry of Human Resources (Disability Benefits Level 2, Vocational Rehabilitation Services) and Ministry of Advanced Education (Community College Special Education Program) of British Columbia as well as Human Resources Development Canada (Employment Assistance Services, Opportunities Fund).
Promising Practice Interview Date:	February 12, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- This promising practice provides a creative 'train-to-work' framework for one young adult who does not qualify for access to typical college or skills training programs. Skills are learned at a worksite so the young adult can prepare for employment in the competitive labour market.
- This service demonstrates the benefits of co-ordinated transitional vocational planning for a young person with a developmental disability through a partnership with the community, including family, employer, Douglas College, employment service and behavioural consultant with the support from provincial and federal governments.
- This is a pilot project. The capacity to take on other clients has not been developed yet and consequently, the program is not being advertised.

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[48] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

Highlights:

- POLARIS' client does not meet the usual entrance criteria for special education programs (i.e. career awareness or skills training programs) at colleges.
- This client learns best in the environment in which she will later be expected to display the relevant work skills and work habits. As a result, her skills development takes place on the job site.
- It is estimated that it may take close to two years for this client to perform the skills required independently. The worksite is essentially hosting an extended college work experience. The goal is to assist the individual to become competitive in the labour market.

Challenges:

- Getting the client to a point where she is more independent and becomes a productive member of the work environment and society is the challenge that POLARIS works to overcome.
- Choosing a job coach with whom the client can work, allowing for sufficient time to allow them to get to know each other before entering the work environment is a challenge. Client trust is an important component to making the process a success.
- There is a need for on-going support. For example minor changes in work responsibilities or processes may necessitate some client re-training.

Results:

- The employer has accommodated the client and adjusted to the unexpected issues coming from someone who is just learning about the world of work. At the same time, the employer has made it clear that business needs come first.
- The client has developed increased autonomy and independence through the use of various communications tools (i.e. verbal cues, cue cards). She uses pictorial cues at home when preparing for work and also on the job site when performing her work.
- Pictorial cues are also used to develop her public safety skills, which also have contributed to greater independence. For example, the client uses Handidart independently to get to and from the workplace.
- Her enhanced self-confidence is resulting in better communication and interactions with co-workers as well as improvement of the skills needed to work in a team setting.
- The client has demonstrated a willingness to make decisions in the workplace.
- The client is experiencing the reality of working in a competitive environment.
- The employer, co-workers, supervisors and general public see the value of this individual's contribution to society. This is important in building support for this type of training in the community.

Costs:

Human Resources Development Canada's Opportunities Funding funds this pilot project. Phase 1 of the project received $13,000 in funding while $1,690 have been received for Phase 2.

C. Background and Context

- The family and the employer were the driving forces of this promising practice. Both parties agreed to create a learning environment where business needs come first. The pilot required a co-operative spirit amongst many players: the social worker, the employment service staff, the college staff, the family, the family supports, the employer and his staff, and the funding agents. Only when the client began to experience what work was like and her desire to participate and learn became evident to everyone involved were fears put to rest.
- Young people with a developmental disability between the ages of 16-25 benefit from integrated schooling and life experiences in that it prepares them and their families to be involved in all aspects of their community, including competitive employment.
- Opportunities for successful employment for this client were increased when the skill development occurred in the actual environment where the skill will be used. Community colleges, employment services and day programs, to date, do not have programs to fit these individuals, and they and their families are now "pushing" the systems to create such experiences.
- The limitations of the practice are in appreciating the time investment needed for long-term results. The scope of the required supports is often not fully appreciated and needs to be evaluated as the training is delivered. Transitional planning and service delivery for young adults with developmental disabilities are necessary and this pilot project demonstrates the success of creative spirit to 'try another way'.

D. The Challenge

- Supporting the client to a point where she is more independent and becomes a productive member of the work environment and society represents a challenge.
- Funding agents and employers may expect too much from the client too soon. Balancing the pressures for results with assisting the client in making progress can be challenging.
- Choosing a job coach with whom the client can work, allowing them to get to know each other before entering the work environment takes time. Client trust is important to making the process a success.
- People with developmental disabilities may be concrete thinkers and therefore may have difficulty expressing themselves about something without first experiencing it. Assisting the employer and other employees to understand the client's learning style requires time and effort.
- Clients must be supported to learn about the new responsibilities and employer expectations they face when participating in the workforce.
- Ensuring clear, consistent communication between the client, her family, employer, co-workers, and other members of her support team
- The need for on-going support is essential as minor changes in work responsibilities and processes may require some re-training of the individual.
- It is important to support parents and siblings in their effort to promote their family member's success.
- Competition in the workplace can make it difficult for people with disabilities to acquire employment. To facilitate employment opportunities, education of employers on the value that people with disabilities bring to a workplace is essential to meet this challenge.
- The diversity among people with disabilities requires creativity in programming and openness on the part of funding agencies.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- Since this is a pilot project with only one client, there is a lack of data to strengthen and/or support this service. POLARIS usually provides anecdotal information to the government in the absence of quantitative data.
- The service is in the beginning stages of measuring the client's performance at the worksite. Industry benchmarks such as absenteeism rates, time it takes to perform certain tasks, etc. are used to measure her performance. The goal of the program is to measure quality first, quantity second. It is important that employer expectations and performance criteria be measurable and timelines set.
- POLARIS has developed an approach for their client that could work for other people with developmental disabilities. There are approximately another 30 individuals in the area who would benefit from a similar program.

Qualitative results:

- Since being at the worksite, the client has become more independent, is more interested in her own life and what she's going to do "tomorrow", more confident and more socially developed. She has developed more skills than she would have acquired through any other training program (i.e., "you can't talk about a job if you don't have one").
- While working at the site, the client has developed relationships with other staff members. The management team involves the client and makes her feel like she is a part of the group. The client attended a staff Christmas party in December 2001 on her own for the first time.
- Staff and managers at the job site are satisfied with the arrangement and support from POLARIS.
- The communication between POLARIS and the client's parents has improved and the parents understand the service's purpose.

The following are comments made by the client's family members regarding the impact POLARIS' services have had on them and the client:

"She now believes in herself that she can do something."

"[This work placement] has opened the doors to social opportunities for her."

"There are more people out there who need this service, but they don't have the help or support."

The following are comments made by the employer regarding POLARIS' services:

Expectations and performance criteria should be measurable. You shouldn't confuse effort with results."

"The effort from the management team is to involve the client and make her feel like part of the group."

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- Learning by doing is essential for those individuals with disabilities who have difficulty transferring classroom skills to the workplace. Having an employer who is willing to provide a work opportunity is allowing this client to progress.
- A service like this must have qualified staff in order to operate effectively and efficiently. POLARIS has a network of qualified staff, pulled together by the Executive Director.
- POLARIS has been able to balance the needs of the government (accountability) with a customized approach to assist an individual towards becoming employed.
- This pilot has demonstrated that individualized services and activities can function within larger service delivery programs. All activities are tailored to an individual client. POLARIS coordinates all programming activities around their client.
- The employer and POLARIS have stated over time what is expected of the other. In subsequent phases of this service, the same boundaries will be coordinated upfront with the employer, client and POLARIS.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- Addressing issues as they occur is helpful in assisting the client to maximize their retention of learning.
- Support and patience from employer/staff, family and community are essential ingredients for success as are buy-in and trust from people in all areas of client's life.
- Consistent messages to the client from all aspects of her life, as well as communications between client, her family, employer, co-workers, social workers, behavioural consultants, funders, etc. are essential for success.
- One-on-one instruction in the work environment and the support of co-workers, supervisors and the general public must take place.
- Having employers who operate in the same community as the client is important as this helps the client feel comfortable and safe and enhances her self-confidence.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- Staff with the appropriate qualifications and experience is needed to provide the required services.
- Regular and frequent communications with all key players must take place to ensure the progress of the client.
- On-going commitment by governments to explore new systems of school - work transition that would serve young people with a developmental disability is imperative.
- The success of the arrangement with the employer is based on an understanding that the employers' business needs come first.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- POLARIS has been successful in getting funding for this pilot. POLARIS will continue to build and develop strong community partnerships.
- The pilot program is moving ahead for this individual. She is in the first year of what will likely be a two-year program to prepare her for competitive standards in the workplace and being a part-time employee.

Future Endeavours:

- To maintain this type of service, POLARIS is working with the province to become more flexible in the funding it provides. It is also looking to champion the cause/need of this service as well as to acquire further support from within the federal and provincial governments and post-secondary institutions.
- Expansion of the program to meet the demand (i.e., there are approximately 30 people in the area that could take advantage of such a service).
- To support the governments' agenda of enhancing employability and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- As of April 2002 POLARIS is expanding their pilot project to include a second individual and a new employer. POLARIS would like to develop a relationship with the client prior to placing him/her in a work setting to allow the client to slowly adjust to the new environment.
- Staff at POLARIS sees this service as a long-term engagement.

EAPD[49] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Gastown Vocational Services (GVS) Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
Program/Service Contact:	Mariella Bozzer, Program Director Gastown Vocational Services #250 – 220 Cambie Street Vancouver, BC V6B 2M9 (604) 683-6047 mariella_bozzer@vrhb.bc.ca http://www.mheccu.ubc.ca/resourceguide/search/details.cfm?ID=7291 Judy Treherne, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Gerrit Van der Leer, BC Ministry of Health Services, Mental Health
Target Group:	Individuals between the ages of 16 and 64 with severe mental health disabilities who live in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.
Delivery Agent:	GVS is a specialized regional rehabilitation service under the auspices of the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. It is funded by provincial Ministries of Health Services and Human Resources (http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/mhd/ and http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/programs/disablty.htm).
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 6th and 7th, 2002.

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- GVS was established in 1991 to provide vocational/psychological assessments, prevocational work readiness programs, career exploration opportunities, job placement services and work experience to individuals with a variety of psychiatric disabilities within a comprehensive 3-phase program.
- GVS' broad goal is to improve the individuals' job readiness skills and support network in order to assist them to become vocationally independent in the community.
- Using a graduated self-directed approach as much as possible, GVS encourages each individual to attain their employment or educational goals based on their interests, strengths and abilities.
- Supported employment services were added to GVS' range of services in 2001 to support and facilitate their clients' transition towards competitive employment.

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[49] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

Highlights:

- GVS fulfils the need of individuals with psychiatric disabilities who require specialized vocational rehabilitation services within a supportive environment as recognized by the mental health community.
- GVS offers assessment, skill building, work experience, career exploration and supported employment services, all geared toward assessing the client's job readiness and to delineating a specific career/job and/or educational training goal. GVS offers a wide range of group programs as well as individual vocational programming in order to meet the wide range of client employment needs.
- Group programs consist of a 8 or 10-week Phase I work readiness program, a 6-week fast track work readiness program, a four-week Career Exploration program, as well as comprehensive vocational/ psychological assessments for each program participant and individualized options.
- Clients that are thought to benefit from an individually tailored program are provided with individual vocational counselling and career exploration in addition to a comprehensive assessment.
- Recently, GVS has been provided with funding to offer supported employment/job placement services.
- The GVS program is readily accessible to clients in the community via self-referral, or alternatively, clients can be referred via their general practitioner, psychiatrist, mental health therapist, family member or advocate in their community.
- A high percentage of clients receiving psychiatric treatment at the mental health teams identify employment and/or education goals as their primary need for rehabilitation intervention.

Challenges:

- The greatest challenge in preparing people with psychiatric disabilities for employment is to develop their self-esteem and confidence as well as coping skills and social skills.
- Many clients do not know their strengths and limitations, or what they would like to do.
- The stigma attached to psychiatric disabilities is a result of misunderstandings and a lack of good information of what these disabilities are all about. When their condition has been disclosed, they are treated differently in the workplace.
- Educating employers and provide strategies for how to accommodate people with mental disabilities is essential to support people with such disabilities obtaining gainful employment.

Results:

- GVS serves approximately 100-120 clients from the Lower Mainland at any one time and currently has a waitlist of 60 clients awaiting the group program.
- It is estimated that about 80% of clients complete the program. Those dropping out of the program typically do so in the first two weeks, usually because: they are not quite ready yet to take on the learning and discipline required to complete the program; due to their psychiatric condition being unstable; or to a lesser degree, due to physical illness or stress external to the program.
- Of the 91 clients served between January 1999 to September 30, 2000 (this only includes clients whose files were closed at the time the report was compiled), 21.9% are employed, 31.5% are enrolled in or referred to college, 7.6% are in skilled training programs; 8.7% work as volunteers, and 6.5% are active in job search. The remaining have either been referred out to other agencies, are not employable at this time or have moved away and contact with them has been lost.
- An evaluation study conducted in 1999 showed that clients referred to GVS over a two-year period by the local mental health centre or vocational rehabilitation consultants underwent a significant positive change in their work behaviours, which was sustained over time. Twenty-two percent had obtained competitive employment at the six-month follow-up.

Costs:

- Clients come to GVS with complex issues and it takes professional expertise to guide them through a graduated step-by-step process. Cost per client is approximately $7,183 per participant per full program, including psychological/vocational assessment, work readiness program, work experience(s) and job placement. It is acknowledged that the program is costly, but also that it is a cost-efficient program as it is meeting its objectives.
- A participant is enrolled in the program for about six to ten months and some choose to come to on-going support sessions.

C. Background and Context

- The target group is adults whose primary barrier to employment is a mental health disability. Typically people with mental health disabilities encounter a variety of barriers in obtaining and maintaining gainful employment.
- GVS is multi-disciplinary and has a full complement of professional staff, including psychologists and occupational therapists. GVS focuses on work adjustment and transferable skills as opposed to training, responding to client needs.
- Studies indicate that the unemployment rate for this disabled population group is as high as 75 – 90%.
- GVS is a funding partnership through the Ministry of Health Services, Mental Health Services (through three health regions) and the Ministry of Human Resources, Vocational Rehabilitation Services.
- The services provided by GVS reflect the philosophy of the best practices for psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery in BC's Mental Health Reform.[50] Client involvement in developing and realizing their personal care and life goals is emphasized by GVS. As well, GVS provides the treatment and support clients need to both manage their symptoms and build on their strengths.
- Since its inception in 1991, GVS has had a waitlist of approximately six months for clients to access the program.
- The waitlist is a result of limitations of space and staffing, and the volume of referrals. Over the past two years, the number of individuals on their waitlist has increased as a result of increased volume of client referrals with no increase in funding to accommodate this increased number of referrals. The actual time on a waitlist continues to be approximately six months as a result of some programs having been shortened.

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[50] *BC's Mental Health Reform, Best Practices for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery* (1999) outlines the kinds of services and strategies that produce positive health outcomes for individuals. The information was gathered through literature reviews and consultations by 44 industry representatives. This initiative has played an important role in shaping programs such as GVS. The following principles of psychosocial rehabilitation are the philosophical foundation for best practices in mental health: client involvement, self-determination, differential needs, utilization of full human capacity, personal choice, natural supports, peer supports, hope, functioning, belonging, outcome measurement, commitment of staff, client/practitioner relationship, early intervention, environmental approach, changing the environment, no limits on participation, work-centered process, and focus on functioning and fulfillment of social roles.

D. The Challenge

- People with mental health disabilities encounter a number of barriers to obtaining and maintaining gainful employment. These include difficulties dealing with stress, low self-confidence and low self-esteem. Many struggle to be assertive or manage their feelings and emotions. Others have cognitive impairments, making it challenging to concentrate, memorize or process information rapidly.
- People with mental health disabilities may experience considerable periods of time when they are unable to work due to illness. Consequently they require up-to-date labour market trend information, assessment of current skills and abilities, and identification of skills transferable from past employment and experience.
- Many clients require skill upgrading to become competitive in today's labour market.
- Another barrier experienced by people with mental health disabilities is stigmatization. False negative perceptions about the abilities and attitudes of people with mental illness are common in society.
- People with mental health disabilities may lack work-related behaviours such as communications skills, hygiene, punctuality and handling feedback.
- Many have limited work experience or gaps in their work history.
- The recurrent or ongoing nature of many mental health disabilities often requires ongoing support from professionals to maintain employment, or alternatively, support while pursuing education or skills training in order to enhance their employability.
- Competitive employment is possible with this population group by providing clients with accurate information regarding vocational strengths and limitations, teaching them coping skills, providing them with practical, hands-on supported work experiences and providing assistance in job placement.
- Individuals should not have recent active major drug or alcohol problems (although there are exceptions made. GVS found in their last demographic data collection activities that 11% had polysubstance abuse problems). They must demonstrate a motivation to return or enter competitive employment.
- Lack of stable housing is counterproductive for clients engaged in vocational rehabilitation.
- Different funders have different requirements. For example, one set of funders permit a certain flexibility of time for clients to undergo services (i.e. clients can have one to three work experiences lasting up to three months each) provided the clients are demonstrating progress, another would like to see the program services shortened. It becomes a challenge to provide services that clients need. As a result of the different requirements and client needs, GVS has responded by creating programs of different lengths, yet maintaining their client-focused services.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- GVS' outcomes include the following based on 91 clients served between January 1999 and September 30, 2000 (this only includes clients whose files were closed at the time the report was compiled): 21.9% are employed; 31.5% are enrolled in or referred to college; 7.6% are in skill training programs; 8.7% work as volunteers; and 6.5% are active in job search.
- **This does not include clients that have either been referred out to other agencies, are not employable at this time or have moved away/contact has been lost.**

- A program evaluation research study on program effectiveness published in 1999 in the Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health indicated that 22% of participants were employed at six-month follow up. Another 56% were on work experience placement.
- The same study also showed that compared to a control group consisting of individuals on GVS' waiting list, GVS clients underwent a significant positive change in their work behaviours, which were sustained over time. The study showed that clients with depression improved their score on the Beck Depression Inventory pre-to post program and that the score was maintained at the six-month follow-up.

Qualitative results:

- Client Satisfaction results indicated that 97% of the clients enrolled in the work readiness program rated the GVS program as helpful (N=63).
- 91% of clients expressed that the GVS program helped prepare them for a work experience placement (N=63).
- Review and analyses of client satisfaction survey results has led to changes in programming over the past two years. This includes adding programming options to increase client choice, streamlining some programs, and changing the group skill building curriculum (e.g. more sessions on assertiveness training for the job, more self-esteem/confidence building sessions, fewer sessions on anger management).
- Clients find GVS' program highly beneficial. They indicate that they have acquired greater self-esteem as a result of the program, they value the training on how to approach job interviews, and for many, assistance in developing their CVs is invaluable. Furthermore, the support given over time, either through the biweekly drop-in groups or calling on GVS staff for questions, allows many clients a safety net they feel they need as they transition to paid employment.
- Clients interviewed indicated that they had or would recommend the program to others.

The following are comments from GVS clients regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

"GVS is one of the better things you can do to get people back to work!"

"It has helped me understand my limitations and can-dos. It has given me a chance to try a dream opportunity."

"I have a hard time getting up and going in the morning. GVS required that I show up on time for my course. It is good that they don't "baby" people. At least, it helped me showing up on time and the time-management section of the course taught me things I still do."

"The course I took at GVS filled a hole on my CV. Without the job placement I did, I wouldn't have had anything to put on my CV for that year."

"There is too much homework and information given to you at the course. I felt stressed over not being able to deal with all the information. I discussed it with GVS staff, and they helped me figure out whether to continue or not."

"The work preparation was good. I wouldn't have been able to get that mental readiness to go looking for work without the program. I didn't think I was worthy."

According to employers who have provided job placement opportunities, GVS provides solid support for both client and employer and is instrumental in making both parties understand what they can and cannot do. The open lines of communications between the three parties are highly valued by clients and employers as both parties feel they have someone to go to should there be any issues at all. It is this support that allows several employers to continue providing job placement opportunities to GVS' clients.

The following are comments made by employers regarding GVS' services:

- *"It is important to provide the right opportunities to prevent failure. An employer must pay attention to any fears or misunderstandings and deal with these right away. Also, it is important to manage other employees so that they feel comfortable."*
- *"The GVS clients that have come to us have little or no skills, but this was the understanding ahead of time. I find it really interesting to see people come out of their shell. One of the clients has paid employment with us now, another is still volunteering and another former client is working part-time for another organization doing similar work."*
- *"We have had great success with GVS clients. It is mutually beneficial to have them come for their job placement portion of the program: they get experience; we get work done that otherwise would not be done. GVS clients want to be there, they are enthusiastic, they have some skills that can be applied here and many of them are mature. We have hired two clients after their placements in our organization."*
- *"An employer needs to be flexible to fit clients' schedule. They start off three days a week and they can set their own hours. And then you ease them into full-time level."*
- *"Many of the clients are looking for particular experiences such as filing or data entry. But our workplace has changed, we now outsource all mailing and distribution and as a result, we don't have as many opportunities anymore for those looking for these types of jobs."*
- *"The relationship with GVS is really good. We usually have three or four meetings. The client is evaluated half-way through the program and then at the end. The meeting provides a chance for employers and clients to evaluate the client's performance. It is interesting to note that clients tend to rate themselves lower than we do. The success of these meetings depends on clients being positive, honest and open and that it is done to help them grow and improve."*

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- Clients benefit from an individually tailored program based on their comprehensive vocational/ psychological assessment results. This information (and the process of feedback to the client) provides the client with increased clarity regarding their cognitive/intellectual capacities, their personality/emotional functioning, their inter and intra-personal functioning as well as their vocational strengths, abilities and interests. Strategies for on-the-job success, or educational accommodations are recommended to them.
- The work readiness program is designed to assist clients who have not been in the workforce recently and who may require a more gradual step-by-step approach to achieve their employment or training goals.
- The fast track focus group is for people who have recent work experience and may need a "refresher" in coping skills and career exploration to delineate a competitive employment goal.
- Individual programming is for clients who are not comfortable in the group environment to have the opportunity, following an assessment, for career exploration via job shadow or work experience and assistance with job placement services, if required.
- The career exploration program provides clients with an opportunity to systematically learn modern job search techniques, how to access educational resources and research occupational options via computer research and informational interviews leading to a work experience or job.
- The addition of supported employment services to supplement the current vocational services at GVS will be an asset in terms of providing the continuity of vocational rehabilitation services from assessment to work readiness/skill training to job placement.
- Providing ongoing support and continuity of vocational rehabilitation services is considered essential for a client's success.
- Many clients come to GVS with complex issues, requiring a graduated step-by-step process. These clients benefit from the wealth of expertise that GVS has.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- Both psychological and vocational assessments as well as an on-the-job assessment are essential.
- Placing people out to work quickly is very important to not lose the momentum built up during the program.
- Ongoing communication regarding vocational planning with GVS staff and with the client's mental health team or general practitioner or psychiatrist, and family members (as relevant) is essential to ensure that clinical treatment augments rehabilitation pursuits.
- Ongoing, regular evening support groups for individuals in employment have proven to be invaluable.
- Partnerships with funders, referral sources and educational institutions and regional coordination of employment service providers are essential for success.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- An organization must have experienced, professional staff.
- An organization must provide one-to-one vocational counselling and ongoing support.
- Referral sources, family members, hospital staff, community rehabilitation staff and individuals must be provided information regarding vocational, educational supports and services.
- An organization must have computer and support services to facilitate career and labour market research.
- An organization must have facilities that are accessible to clients by transit.
- Many people with mental health disabilities in unstable housing situations may require more appropriate housing in order for them to focus on their vocational/employment/educational goals.

G. Next Steps for This Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- GVS is continuing to more clearly assess which types of clients would most benefit from the eight to 10-week work readiness program and which types of clients would be best served by immediate job placement services following a brief assessment. It is important for clients to get a blend of support and challenge, as this is the environment in which people function best.
- GVS is completing data collection and analysis from the Emotional Quotient Inventory as a pre/post program outcome measure.
- GVS is continuing to increase flexibility of programming options, and to evaluate the success of the newly developed job placement service component.
- GVS will continue to advocate for employment for individuals with psychiatric disabilities through coordinated marketing strategies with current vocational agencies in the community.

Future Endeavours:

- GVS plans to continue its research into program effectiveness, including exploring different program lengths depending on the needs of the clients. In addition, GVS plans to continue to explore inventories and tools to help determine which individuals benefit from which type of programming interventions.
- GVS plans to conduct exit interviews on clients who withdraw from the program prior to its completion to get a better picture of what factors are involved in withdrawing.
- GVS will be offering supported educational services at GVS versus referring clients out to another agency for this service (i.e. current practice). GVS will also be assisting clients in looking for work, and transition into the labour force will be an important addition to the services currently offered.
- GVS will continue to offer clients flexibility and choice in vocational programming options. GVS will also facilitate and advocate for increased coordination of vocational and educational supports in the community.
- GVS plans to review process objectives formulated for the year 2001, and establish priorities for 2002 in terms of program quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

EAPD[51] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Kamloops Avenues To Capturing Employment (ACE) Program / BC Society of Training for Health and Employment Opportunities (THEO BC)
Program/Service Contact:	Tom Burnell, Executive Director 657 Victoria St. Kamloops, BC V2C 2B3 Phone: 604-872-0770 Email: tburnell@theobc.org http://www.theobc.org *Gerrit Van der Leer, BC Ministry of Health Services, Adult Mental Health Policy Division*
Target Group:	People with disabilities aged 16-65 who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and who are residents of Kamloops (certain other eligibility requirements must be met, such as not constituting a threat to staff or other clients, not having any addictions, etc.).
Delivery Agent:	THEO BC is funded by Human Resources Development Canada, the Central Interior Partners in Aboriginal Human Resource Development and by provincial Ministries of Health Services and Human Resources (http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/mhd/ and http://www.mhr.gov.bc.ca/programs/disablty.htm)
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 7th and 8th, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- THEO BC supports people with disabilities living in Kamloops to choose, get and keep paid employment. The program assists clients to increase their economic independence and self-esteem, and pursue their employment and training goals. THEO BC is the delivery agent for this program.
- In August 2001, THEO BC extended its services to Aboriginal people with disabilities with the overall purpose of increasing their employment opportunities. Approximately 2,500 Aboriginal people in the Shuswap area have some form of disability. The geographic area is large and includes about 40 communities both on and off reserve.

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[51] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

- THEO BC utilizes a single entry point (everyone begins with two to three career assessment sessions), leading to a series of flexible options depending on client goals. For example, upon completion of the career assessment process, a program participant may choose to progress through each option available to him/her (occupational training, job search workshops, and then to job placement) or he/she may want to go directly into a job placement.
- Staff works one-on-one with participants. Participants receive ongoing support once they have been placed in a job. They also continue to receive support after their goals are met. This includes short-term job coaching, one-, three-, six-, and 12-month follow-up. Files are not closed until the participant has been employed for a year.

Highlights:

- THEO BC provides services in Kamloops that include career assessments and planning, resume workshops, job skills training, independent or assisted job search, on-the-job support and continued support and follow-up for maintaining paid employment. They also provide an up-to-date resource centre with labour market information and have a computer lab for participants to use.
- THEO BC opened The Gardengate Training Centre in July 2001 to expand their services. The contributions of many community volunteers, individuals and organizations helped to make this unique project a reality in Kamloops. Gardengate offers four 'hands-on' learning workshops that provide opportunities for students to attain a variety of skills. The content of these workshops range from organic gardening to food preservation.

Challenges:

- Many clients lack knowledge about what employers are looking for and how to go about preparing themselves to find employment in today's labour market.
- Many Aboriginal people with disabilities lack trust in the entire system of support. The challenge is to patiently nurture relationships that build trust and confidence in the program. Promoting awareness of the support that THEO BC provides is also a challenge. For example, there are currently 32 bands being served by THEO BC. To reach all of these requires sustained effort and time.
- Many employers lack knowledge and information about people with disabilities. They are unaware of the various supports, accommodations and technologies that are available. The challenge is to continue to promote greater awareness of available supports in the community.
- Going from providing services to one population group to a number of different groups also presents challenges. For example:
    - What sort of specialized services are required for each group?
    - What are the staff training needs?

Results:

- THEO BC's track record and general level of community satisfaction has resulted in an accreditation from the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission (PPSEC) and increased funding from a variety of government and community agencies.
- In 2002, ten people will enrol in the horticulture program offered at the Gardengate Training Centre. It is estimated that of the ten people, six will acquire competitive employment.
- The Gardengate Training Centre opened its door in July of 2001 and therefore it is premature to assess the outcome.

- Activity Reports for January 2002 show the following results:
    - 68 were active participants in various phases of the program. Of these:
        - 30 participants completed the Resume workshop;
        - 10 participants completed the Job Search workshop;
        - 21 participants completed the Career Assessment phase. Participants who have completed the Career Assessment phase are currently moving into the assisted employment phase;
        - 2 participants completed a job placement term and are looking for employment;
        - 2 participants are enrolled in employment related training at a job site;
        - 1 participant has completed 10 weeks of full-time employment;
        - 2 participants are employed part-time; and
        - 2 participants are enrolled in college/trade school.
- In the Kamloops area, THEO BC has established a wide network of employer connections that is utilized in acquiring paid employment for their clients.

Costs:

- The project has acquired $496,000 in funding for 2001-2002. Cost per participant for the project is $3,815 per year. THEO BC does not calculate cost per month per participant as the length of time that someone uses their services varies greatly.

C. Background and Context

- THEO BC is a non-profit organization that has provided training and education opportunities since 1975 for people with mental health disabilities. Until 1998, THEO BC's services were Vancouver based, thus, THEO BC was an "urban" based organization.
- In 1998, responding to the lack of employment placement services for mental health consumers, the Ministry of Health approached THEO BC to establish a Supported Employment program in Kamloops. The Supported Employment project was to incorporate a best practices methodology.
- The services provided by THEO BC reflect the philosophy of the best practices for psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery for BC's Mental Health Reform.[52] Client involvement in developing and realizing their personal care and life goals is emphasized by THEO BC. As well, THEO BC provides the treatment and support clients need to both manage their symptoms and build on their strengths.
- In 2001, THEO BC received funding from the federal government (HRDC) and the Aboriginal community to provide Supported Employment services for people with disabilities.
- In the spring of 2001, THEO BC received an accreditation from the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission (PPSEC) to provide education and training programs.

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[52] *BC's Mental Health Reform, Best Practices for Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery* (1999) outlines the kinds of services and strategies that produce positive health outcomes for individuals. The information was gathered through literature reviews and consultations by 44 industry representatives. This initiative has played an important role in shaping programs such as THEO BC. The following principles of psychosocial rehabilitation are the philosophical foundation for best practices in mental health: client involvement, self-determination, differential needs, utilization of full human capacity, personal choice, natural supports, peer supports, hope, functioning, belonging, outcome measurement, commitment of staff, client/practitioner relationship, early intervention, environmental approach, changing the environment, no limits on participation, work-centered process, and focus on functioning and fulfillment of social roles.

- In 2000, THEO BC in partnership with the Kamloops Food Policy Council (agencies representing the food bank, community kitchens, local nutritionists, farmers, and so on) established the Gardengate Steering Committee. The partnership received $100,000 in seed funding from the provincial Ministry of Health and Ministry of Community Development Cooperatives and Volunteers.
- In 2001, the physical (greenhouse, training rooms, and a one acre garden) and program infrastructure (program design, curriculum and systems) for Gardengate was established. Gardengate is an off-site training centre where THEO BC offers workshops on horticultural related subjects to program participants. In November of 2001, workshops were initiated at Gardengate and a Diploma program began in February 2002.

D. The Challenge

- While government and community partnerships instil vitality and engender an increased range of services, they also give rise to several challenges. These challenges include ensuring that there is a balance between the competing needs and expectations of the various partners, and tracking the results of clients who come under different funding criteria.
- Establishing a comprehensive Supported Employment program in a mid-range regional community represents a challenge not found in large urban, metropolitan settings, as opportunities for employment for people with disabilities are not as easily available.
- It is a challenge to establish and maintain partnerships with community members (for example employers and chiefs) that are willing to adopt proven program methods and at the same time remain true to the economic and social needs of the local community.
- Providing a comprehensive service to a number of different groups presents several challenges. These challenges include ensuring that specialized needs of individuals are met while at the same time providing services that are effective and efficient.
- Many clients lack knowledge about what employers are looking for and how to go about preparing themselves to find employment in today's labour market.
- Many Aboriginal people with disabilities lack trust in the entire system of support. The challenge is to patiently nurture relationships that build trust and confidence in the program. Promoting awareness of the support that THEO BC provides is also a challenge. For example, there are currently 32 bands being served by THEO BC. To reach all of these requires much effort and time.
- Many employers lack knowledge and information about people with disabilities. They are unaware of the various supports, accommodations and technologies that are available. The challenge is to continue to promote greater awareness of available supports in the community.
- Many clients come to THEO BC with personal issues and have very low self-confidence / self-esteem. Many have experienced prejudice and stereotyping. These experiences leave clients unsure of where to go and how to go about finding work. THEO BC meets this challenge by helping participants improve their self-esteem and confidence through developing individualized goal plans that take into account the whole person, outlining strengths and limitations.
- Determining the 'readiness' of individuals to enter the workforce is a challenge.
- Matching the skills of the client with the needs and requirements of employers is challenging and also highly important in achieving the desired results.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- Since this program started only recently, only a few quantitative measures are currently available. It is anticipated that information related to results and outcomes will be available in approximately eight months.
- A review of workshop surveys and feedback indicate that the Gardengate program is highly regarded and valued by the participants. An overall participant satisfaction rating of 89% (for staff and program) indicate that THEO BC has been very effective in achieving superior results. THEO BC plans to use the feedback to modify and refine current programming.
- Activity Reports for January 2002 show the following results:
  - 68 were active participants in various phases of the program. Of these:
    - 30 participants completed the Resume workshop;
    - 10 participants completed the Job Search workshop;
    - 21 participants completed the Career Assessment phase. Participants who have completed the Career Assessment phase are currently moving into the assisted employment phase;
    - 2 participants completed a job placement term and are looking for employment;
    - 2 participants are enrolled in employment related training at a job site;
    - 1 participant has completed 10 weeks of full-time employment;
    - 2 participants are employed part-time; and
    - 2 participants are enrolled in college/trade school.
- Before the changes to the program in 2001, THEO BC achieved placement rates of 60+% for clients with mental health and psychiatric disabilities.

Qualitative results:

- Community support is very strong. The placement co-ordinator at THEO BC has developed a good network of employers whom she has educated about the needs of people with disabilities.
- THEO BC has produced very positive results within the Aboriginal community. Aboriginal people with disabilities are starting to trust the organization and its staff, and based on staff's perception, their participation has increased since September 2001 when the program expanded to include this population.
- HRDC approached THEO BC to begin a Supported Education program for its clients. Mid-January 2002 marked the first successful client completion of a course.
- Great attempts have been made to make THEO BC a cost-effective program. The Gardengate facility is an excellent example of results produced by involving the community and volunteers. The state of the economy has a direct impact on THEO BC's ability to optimize cost effectiveness. When the economy slows down, opportunities for employment also decrease, making it more difficult to achieve its outcomes.

- THEO BC participants indicate that the program not only helps them to prepare for and find employment, but it takes into consideration the varying circumstances and limitations that affect a person's ability to maintain employment. Addressing the barriers, finding workable solutions and providing continuous follow-up were considered key to success by participants.
- Participants indicated that a strong sense of self-worth and confidence were the result of support from program administrators.
- Many participants will or have recommended this program to others.

The following are comments from THEO BC's clients regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

"THEO is very active in helping me finding a job. I received more job prospects than ever before. There is great effort put into a specific job match that caters to both my likes and dislikes."

"THEO has given me a strong sense of self-worth and confidence. I persisted in a job search ....something that I definitely would not have felt confident enough to do in the past."

"I like the fact that THEO not only helps me find work but it takes into consideration my personal and family needs. The personal interest is very important."

"The staff are very honest. If they don't know the answer to something – they find out."

"Other organizations do not go to the same extent to help that THEO does."

The following are comments made by employers regarding THEO BC's services:

"THEO brings people to us that are highly motivated to work."

"There is always assistance provided to us. It is a package deal."

"Barriers and attitudes towards people with disabilities still exist. It requires extra effort and time by employers to deal with it. I created (adapted) five positions for people with disabilities. Not all employers see it as an opportunity to hire people with disabilities."

"Educating the employer is important. We are not used to dealing with people with disabilities. This has been very successful."

"Third-party (i.e. referral agents) involvement complicates things. To get more employers on-board it needs to be as simple as possible."

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- The extensive 'intake' program enables staff to truly understand not only the disability and its unique impact on each person but also how each person perceives themselves, their limitations, their positive qualities as well as their weaknesses.
- One-on-one counselling ensures that the individual's goal plan is tailored specifically to their needs.
- THEO BC's approach to providing adaptive aids is innovative. Initially the employer purchases the equipment and is reimbursed by HRDC. The employer then signs a contract stating that the adaptive aids are the property of the employee. The advantage to this is that the employee has a greater degree of independence when attempting to transition to another job, making it unnecessary for the next employer to purchase or arrange for the aids. It has proven to be an effective means to reduce the accommodation barrier in the workplace.

- The results of preparatory workshops (i.e. resume development, job skills) indicate that these are highly successful in assisting people with disabilities to find and maintain employment.
- THEO BC supports participants throughout their job placements. Such supports include job coaching, access to counselling, and on-site negotiations with employers for up to a year.
- Community support of the Gardengate project is strong, evidenced by the many volunteers that have contributed to its success.
- THEO BC's success is based on the provision of comprehensive services. The program provides their services both effectively and efficiently.
- THEO BC's new facilities offer greater accessibility to its resource centre, making it easier for clients to go there to take advantage of the resources available.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- In order to support people with disabilities who have different needs, it is essential that there be individualized services and individualized employment plans.
- THEO BC gives the client the responsibility of accomplishing tasks on his/her own (with support when needed) to enhance their self-confidence and independence.
- Offering resume development and job skills workshops on an on-going basis is essential.
- THEO BC's approach to providing clients with adaptive aids (i.e. the aids follow the person rather than employer or training institution) allows clients greater independence in changing employment and reduces an important barrier for people with disabilities to obtain gainful employment.
- Establishing the Gardengate training facility provides clients an opportunity to improve their skills related to a trade specific to their community. This heightens clients' chances for finding employment upon completion.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- On-going relationship-building and partnerships with key people and employers in the community is necessary to build program awareness.
- Adequately qualified staff with the relevant expertise and experience in employability programming for people with disabilities is essential.
- Acquiring the trust and integrity of the various band members, including the chiefs, is essential in reaching the Aboriginal target population.
- It is vitally important that program staff's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined to enable greater program efficiency and effectiveness.
- There must be on-going commitment and funding by all orders of government and the community for the program. The relationship and communication between the funding sources must be solid.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- The 2001-2002 version of the ACE program is in its infancy. The program model, structure, premises, systems and staffing are now in place. The new funding has allowed THEO BC to hire additional staff (from two staff to six). Expectations from the government and local community are also greater.
- Coordinating and implementing the new project in an effective and efficient manner is an on-going challenge. At the same time, since previous results have been exemplary, the actual program structure is expected to be continued.
- THEO BC plans to continue to monitor the results of the programming in order to assess cost effectiveness.
- THEO BC plans to continue to raise their profile and awareness within the community.
- THEO BC plans to increase the number of participating employers within the community by improving awareness-raising activities.
- THEO BC will continue to educate the Aboriginal community about the program as well raising awareness about the contribution that Aboriginal people with disabilities can make to employers. Developing and maintaining a level of trust in the Aboriginal community will take time and dedication.
- Balancing the needs of different population groups (mental health with other disabilities) and ensuring that staff is adequately trained to meet their needs remains a challenge that will continue to be met by THEO BC.
- Balancing partners' competing interests will continue to be a challenge and needs to be worked on.
- Acquiring ongoing operating funding for Gardengate will continue to be a focus.

Future Endeavours:

- THEO BC will develop a tool to evaluate client satisfaction with the services provided to them.
- A participant advisory committee will be established to encourage more participant involvement in program enhancements.
- THEO BC has started the process of establishing a provincially recognized Gardengate horticultural diploma program.
- Plans are in place to make the transition between THEO BC and Gardengate smooth so participants can easily transition from THEO BC's in-take program to Gardengate and back. Participants can obtain experience and potentially earn a diploma and then proceed to THEO BC's resume workshops and job search programs.
- THEO BC sees opportunities for the expansion of the program to also provide hands-on experience in other areas, such as woodworking. However, this will require additional funding, and is a long-term goal.

EAPD[53] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	The Behavioural Health Foundation Inc. (BHF): Men's, Women's & Family Program.
Program/Service Contact:	Lorne Weir, Executive Director 35 Avenue de la Digue Winnipeg, MB Phone: (204) 269-3430 lornew@bhf.ca
Target Group:	Men and women who have an addiction problem, and their dependent children. Adults applying for the program must have been unable, due to addictive behaviours and related problems, to effectively function in society and have a desire to change. In addition, they must have an ability to absorb, respond and carry out basic routines, must not be on any mood-altering or psychotropic substances, must not have a criminal history of either sexual assault or arson, and must be able to physically negotiate BHF's facility.
Delivery Agent:	Behavioural Health Foundation Inc.
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 18th and 19th, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- The Behavioural Health Foundation is an internationally accredited and provincially licensed addiction treatment facility. BHF meets the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission's standards, the first facility of its kind in Canada to do so, and is, therefore, recognized for its commitment to continually enhancing the quality of its services and programs.
- BHF is the only long-term residential addictions treatment program in Manitoba for men, women and dependent children who, because of the presence of addiction in their lives, are unable to function satisfactorily.
- The program offers a comprehensive array of services to its clients, including graduated vocational, intellectual and communicative skills development programs for their successful integration into society, free of addictive behaviours.
- Residents who enter the program as a family unit also receive program components related to family dynamics around addictions, such as how to build healthy relationships and improve family functioning.

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[53] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

- In addition to group and individual counselling, BHF offers several programs to its clients. These include, but are not limited to: Parent Effectiveness Training, Expressing and Managing Anger, Family Violence Education Series, Outgrowing Addictions Seminars, Traditional Teachings (Aboriginal culture), and Employment Readiness Training. A certificate is presented to clients who complete these courses to recognize this accomplishment.
- BHF also provides a number of other services, as follows: Criminal Court/Family Court services; psychological assessments, therapy and referrals; work activities / employment readiness; Well Baby clinics; licensed preschool and school-age daycare; K to grade 6 classes for dependent children; special education for adolescents; and adult education /literacy classes. In addition to these, BHF gives regular seminars and workshops on topics such as women's issues and pre-and postnatal care. While these services are mainly for current residents, BHF will accept past residents who continue to have needs.
- At the completion of the program, residents will either have obtained employment or be involved in an educational or vocational program as a step towards employment. The service outcomes related to this goal, all of which are indicative of maintaining a positive lifestyle, are:
    - increased employability/employment;
    - increased educational level and/or continued education;
    - decreased or no new involvement in the criminal justice system;
    - sobriety or reduced substance use; and
    - stability within their family environment.

Highlights:

- BHF has what is referred to as a "holistic" approach to addictions through a long-term, residential program that affords an opportunity to face current and underlying issues, learn general life skills, improve education levels and increase chances for finding employment.
- BHF is the only addictions treatment program in Canada where participants can bring their children and/or spouse along into the residential program.
- A theme that permeates the entire program is the development of a positive lifestyle, which will enable residents to reintegrate into the community as productive members of society.
- Those that graduate from the program have corrected their addictive behaviours, and have developed, tested and chosen constructive alternative lifestyles.
- BHF is set up to actively involve residents in all the work necessary to make the facility operate. For example, residents are responsible for preparing all meals (under the supervision of a head cook), doing laundry and providing transportation for residents who need to see a doctor or go to a job interview.

Challenges:

- BHF's challenge is to ensure that the program continues to be progressive in terms of addiction treatment. Additionally, ensuring that staff expertise is adequate to deliver these services is an on-going challenge.
- Many residents lack an understanding of why any form of routine is essential in day-to-day life. It is a challenge to educate people in basic living skills that will enable them to progress towards employability.
- Most people who come to BHF have underlying issues that contribute to their addictive behaviour. It is a challenge to ascertain what these issues are and how to adequately address them.
- BHF has a substantial waiting list for its services. With budgetary restraints, it is always a challenge to be able to provide services to those that need them and thereby reduce the waiting list.

- Although staff do follow-up of graduated clients six months after the completion of the program, resource constraints make it challenging to do more thorough or extensive follow-up to assess the impact of the program over time.
- It is also a challenge to provide more extensive outreach assistance to graduated participants with the current resource base. This on-going support would further enhance the program's success.

Results:

- During the 2000-01 fiscal year, only a very small number of those entering the program had ever held a full-time permanent job. Most BHF clients have few marketable skills and very little, if any, job experience. BHF assesses clients' employment options, helps clients set occupational goals and provides supported job-search services. During this fiscal year, 119 members (40%) secured paid employment. Of these, 42 (35%) had found full-time positions.
- Based on a recent evaluation of the program, of 295 intakes during 2000-01, the average length of time for a client to remain in the program was 91.8 days. This breaks down as follows:
    - 29% were in the program for less than 30 days
    - 19% were in the program between 30 – 60 days
    - 12% were in the program between 60 – 90 days
    - 41% were in the program for more than 90 days
- The recent evaluation results indicated that only one resident felt that the program had not changed *him/her* at all, 26% felt that they had changed somewhat, 61% felt they had changed a lot and 10% felt they had totally changed. The changes referred to were positive in all instances, including things such as feeling healthier, becoming more assertive, appreciating punctuality, gaining better self-control and self-esteem, and accepting responsibility for their actions.

Costs:

- The average cost per client is approximately $89 per day.

C. Background and Context

- The Behavioural Health Foundation was formerly known as the St. Norbert Foundation. Its philosophy has stayed the same for more than three decades and emphasizes the responsibility of clients for their own actions, growth and well-being. The residential community is considered a transitory support, allowing participants the opportunity to identify underlying causes and reasons that may have led to an addiction. The program assists participants to learn to deal with obstacles, set goals, work towards such goals, and evaluate and develop their self-worth.
- BHF is relevant to the EAPD Agreement's principles in that it provides direct support of employability through its services to prepare people with a disability (in this case, the definition extends to include adults who are unable to function in society due to an addiction) for participation in the labour market and to assist them in retaining employment through on-going support systems.
- For residents to attain a positive lifestyle, the program focuses in large part on the development of employment-related skills. There is a significant link between reducing the use of substances and obtaining employment. Staff at BHF therefore works with residents to overcome their addiction by utilizing a variety of pre-employment preparation activities (i.e., skills assessments; resume-writing; interview skills; acquiring positive work attitudes, habits and skills; establishing work routines; and pursuing educational goals).
- BHF assigns work activities to residents at their facility to provide them with basic work experience. This also allows BHF an opportunity to more fully understand each resident in terms of their future employment or schooling needs and eventual independent living. BHF also teaches residents "there is no free lunch".

- BHF's Learning Centre offers on-site computer-based literacy training for up to twelve participants. The participants are persons who generally function below a Grade 4 level in English and mathematics, as tested prior to intake. Residents are encouraged to attend educational opportunities available in the community, such as correspondence courses and adult upgrading classes. Foundation staff assists with career counselling and gives advice to potential students on the financial assistance programs available.
- Approximately 88% (based on 2000-01 statistics) of BHF residents are unemployed prior to entering the program. Employment planning is therefore an important component of BHF's program. Work placement services have shown to be very useful in helping residents to develop skills that will lead to a positive lifestyle change, including the attainment of meaningful employment. The Foundation has developed an employer recruitment initiative to further support residents in securing employment. BHF has developed partnerships with several businesses in the city, and forwards residents' resumes to these businesses. Residents who are placed in positions of employment are monitored and those who are conducting a job search must provide evidence that they are meeting with prospective employers.

D. The Challenge

- BHF has a substantial waiting list for its services. With budgetary restraints, it is always a challenge to be able to provide services to those who need them and thereby reduce the waiting list.
- BHF staff does follow-up of clients six months after the completion of the program. With more staff and resources, BHF would have liked to do more thorough follow-up as well as provide more aftercare assistance, believed to enhance the success of the residents and the program.
- Many residents lack an understanding of why any form of routine is essential in day-to-day life. It is a challenge to educate people in basic living skills that will enable them to progress towards employability.
- Most people who come to BHF have underlying issues that contribute to their addictive behaviour. It is a challenge to ascertain what these issues are and how to adequately address them.
- It is a challenge to help people that are not at BHF of their own initiative. For example, BHF partners with the Criminal Justice system. In the event that the program is regarded as a suitable option for a client, they are granted a conditional release if they enter BHF for treatment. In addition, an individual awaiting trial may be granted bail recognizance for the purpose of entering the program.
- Approximately 80% of the residents are Aboriginal. As a result, BHF programming has a strong Aboriginal component. It is a challenge to ensure that programming continues to address the needs of people of all cultures.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- The month-end average of individuals on the waiting list for BHF services is147.
- Of the 295 clients who entered BHF between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2001, 55% had previously undergone treatment for addictions, 34% had an education level of Grade 9 or less and 76% of clients were Aboriginal.
- BHF achieved the following with this group:
    - Of the 295 clients that entered the Foundation (200 males, 95 females), only 13% of the clients were employed at the time of entry compared with 37% who were employed (full-time or part-time) at the time of exit.
    - 55% of those surveyed six months after program exit were employed.
    - The 61 clients entering the education portion of the program were tested and found to be, on average, at a grade 7.7 level. After completing their residence at BHF, their average level had increased to 8.5 grade level.
    - 6 months after the completion of primary treatment, 25% had continued educational upgrading within their communities.

- From a follow-up with 120 former clients six months after the completion of the program, the following results could be observed:
  - 72% of former participants reported either being free of substance use (76 clients) or having reduced their substance use (25 clients); and
  - 79% indicated they had no new involvement with the criminal justice system.
- The primary goal for residents at the Foundation is the development of a positive lifestyle. BHF's experience has shown that the following have been of little or no value in helping participants to become addiction free and employment ready:
  - Twelve step programs (these programs remove the responsibility from the individual and results are often short-lived);
  - Not allowing individuals the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them;
  - Programs assuming the role of being primarily responsible for the individual's progress and success, rather than teaching individuals to be responsible for themselves; and
  - Encouraging an attitude of entitlement rather than fostering a sense of earning (this does not allow an individual to achieve a sense of self-worth).

Qualitative results:

- A recent evaluation indicated the following satisfaction results:
  - Residents commented that they liked the traditional components of the programming, individualized counselling, outgrowing addictions sessions, parenting sessions and anger management sessions.
  - The adult education component of the program was highly rated by those who participated.
  - Residents highly valued the community involvement through outings and recreational activities.
  - The program's overall impact on alcohol / drug problems achieved a very high rating.
  - When describing potential changes in their lives, residents reported only positive experiences.
  - In general, participants felt that they were getting the help and support needed in order to make changes in their lives.

The following are comments from BHF's participants regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

"Daily routine, doing work activities taught me skills that I need to be independent. I feel more confident in myself, which helps me look for a job, and to keep trying if one doesn't work out."

"I am sober, drug free and employed."

"I've learned not to assume you know what people are thinking. No one can make you happy and no one can make you angry. It has been a long haul – some days so bad. Now I am better equipped to deal with issues and have learned to face them."

"I've learned how to feel true emotions."

"I've learned to be considerate of the other persons' feelings and how others perceive things. I can deal with situations in a non-violent manner."

"I appreciate the opportunity and convenience of furthering my education."

"The native culture components are optional and no one is ever forced to participate. We are free to choose our beliefs."

"The on-going follow-up is very beneficial. BHF gives me a sense of accomplishment."

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- Participants are involved in shaping the services BHF provides. This eliminates the top down "this is what you require" approach, which has been proven not to work with these clients.
- Involving the family unit in all aspects of training and counselling is important for program success.
- BHF's clients are able to access educational and work activity resources while at the same time allowing them to maintain their family commitments and other social responsibilities.
- Long-term planning is important for success. Such plans incorporate the individual's interests, work skills, behavioural functioning and supports needed.
- BHF's success is based on the principle that there is not any one procedure or process applicable to all. Each person is unique in their abilities, needs and skills. As a result, BHF takes an individualized approach to employability programming.
- The Functional Literacy Skills courses have been found to increase clients' general understanding of employment advertisements and employer expectations.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- A "holistic" approach to addictions is essential to success. A long-term, residential program affords an opportunity to face current and underlying issues, learn general life skills, improve education levels and increase the opportunities for finding employment.
- The availability of childcare services both during the day and in the evenings enables adults to take full advantage of the programs offered.
- BHF provides sessions on what they call "Reality Checks" for all residents to develop their social and interpersonal skills with the objective of fostering a positive self-image.
- An approach that enables the person to gradually take on more and more responsibility and assume increased authority is extremely valuable to people with addictive behaviours. This also builds up trust between the client and BHF.
- Support programs such as individual counselling, employment readiness groups, follow-up support groups, day care, educational opportunities, and transitional support (i.e., transition houses) are essential to the success of this program.
- Supported education programs and employment options must take into consideration the strengths and limitations of the participants.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- Adequate level of staffing to meet the needs of those in residence is essential. Staff must collectively have the expertise and experience required to effectively operate the various aspects of the program. In addition, staff members who are committed and sincere in their efforts to assist people have greater success in helping people with addictive behaviours change their lifestyle.
- Building and maintaining relationships and awareness with employers and educational institutions in the community are essential to making sure that there are both educational and employment opportunities for people.
- Communication between the various funding sources must be on-going and integrated. Reporting structures must be in place to optimize the efficiency of the program as well as to assess the progress of all program aspects.
- BHF must remain innovative and open-minded to new treatment methods, while at the same time, assess the current value of a program component.
- The prohibition of using any kinds of mood-altering substances while in residence is essential for success.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- BHF will continue to collect data to assess and analyse program results. The results will continue to be used as the basis for determining the feasibility of making program changes.
- BHF will continue to keep up-to-date with current treatment options and assess the feasibility and impact of such options prior to implementation.
- BHF will continue to raise awareness of the program and its benefits to the community.
- BHF will continue to use its transition houses in Winnipeg to assist in re-integrating clients into the community.
- BHF is planning to continue its efforts to connect its training curriculum to the needs of employers. The Foundation is exploring opportunities to do this more efficiently using an HRDC project called Applications of Working and Learning (AWAL). The project helps to build connections between educators and people, between curriculum and the workforce, and between schools and the community.
- BHF will continue to monitor the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of all the programs offered.
- BHF will continue to provide up-to-date status reports to all funding agencies.

Future Endeavours:

- BHF sees opportunities to expand its services. However, the current waiting list and size of the facility prevent this from taking place in the near future.
- There is a need to provide additional outreach services to those who have completed the treatment phase and have exited the program. This may include support groups in the urban areas as well as an Internet support group. BHF will look into the possibility of doing this in the future as an overall effort to consistently improve its services and to actively meet the needs of the target community.

EAPD[54] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Career Connections Inc. (CCI)
Program/Service Contact:	George McLeod, Executive Director 710 – 3rd Street Brandon, Manitoba R7A 3C8 Phone: (204) 728-9594 e-mail: careerci@mb.sympatico.ca
Target Group:	People with developmental/cognitive, psychiatric and physical disabilities.
Delivery Agent:	Career Connections Inc. is a non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and funded primarily by Manitoba Family Services and Housing's Vocational Rehabilitation Program.
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 20th and 21st, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- Career Connections provides community-based employment services. These services include individualized vocational assessments and counselling, employment preparation and long-term follow-up and support.
- The overall objective of the program is to deliver, in a systematic manner, comprehensive vocational assessment and training services to persons with mental, psychiatric, physical and learning disabilities, in accordance with the special needs, abilities and choices of each individual.
- Sixty-four percent of CCI's client base includes people with intellectual/learning disabilities, 15% have psychiatric disabilities, 18% have physical disabilities and 3% have vision impairments.

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[54] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

- Activities include:
    - Determining clients' work habits and skills, abilities, strengths and weaknesses through a comprehensive assessment process;
    - Seeking out and finding job opportunities for clients and assisting them in obtaining employment; and
    - Providing long-term follow-up support to both clients and employers through the use of CCI facilitators who spend time at the worksite, if needed.

Highlights:

- Approximately 150 participants are served by CCI annually, with generally 100 individuals receiving services at any one time. Eighty per cent acquire employment, with some of these participants being supported by CCI until they have achieved sufficient skills to be able to work independently.
- Career Connections has created a very high level of awareness of its program in the community. As a direct result of this corporate identity and strategic marketing efforts, many employers will contact them when they have a staff vacancy, especially for entry-level positions.
- CCI staff train and provide support to each client, employer and, if necessary, co-workers to increase the likelihood of successful long-term employment for their clients.

Challenges:

- A key challenge for CCI is to maintain the level of staff expertise and experience required to address the barriers and issues of all types and severity of disabilities. This challenge is a result of high staff attrition rates, caused by the fact that staff are currently paid considerably less than those holding similar positions in other organizations, especially those who are civil servants or employed by the Regional Health Authority. Although CCI staff are very dedicated to their work and to their clients, retention of experienced staff is an ongoing challenge.
- While access to CCI's services is available to those in Brandon and communities located within a 100 km radius of Brandon, it is a challenge to support potential clients and employers who are more than 50 km from the CCI office.
- It is a challenge to continually look for new, innovative and up-to-date approaches to employability programming due to limited resources.
- In recent years, CCI has worked with school divisions in the Brandon area for the purpose of providing vocational assessments for students with disabilities. This takes place six months before students complete their high school diploma and addresses the challenge of reaching students and assisting them in making educational and vocational choices just before they leave school. However, CCI is still faced with the challenge of improving the transitional planning process by developing relationships with students earlier so that their education can be focused towards employability in vocational areas consistent with the skills, abilities and interests identified through a vocational assessment.

Results:

- CCI has established a network of 200 employers who are willing to partner with CCI for the purpose of giving work training to their client base, leading to eventual employment.
- Several of these employers have hired as many as two or three people with disabilities.
- Current CCI statistics show that their clients' length of employment ranges from six months to 12 years. This indicates that long-term employment is being achieved by CCI's clients.
- Interviews with clients also show that many people with disabilities are now employed in the type of work that they "like to do".

Costs:

- CCI receives funding from the province of Manitoba which consists of an administrative grant and a per diem of $26.35 (made up of three rates for reserved space, regular rate and special rate). When combined, this funding averages $35.00 per day for 11,700 training days per year.
- In addition, the Day Services Program of Manitoba Family Services and Housing provides per diem funding of $23.85 for follow-up services, for up to a maximum of 50 days per year for each participant, to support individuals who are eligible for the Community Living Program because of their mental disability.

C. Background and Context

- Career Connections is located in the City of Brandon, which has a population of less than 50,000, but is a progressive, growing community located approximately 200 km west of Winnipeg. Recent expansion in the industrial, service and hospitality sectors has resulted in an economic boom in Brandon.
- In the early 1990s, CCI changed its program to align itself with changes in the Manitoba Vocational Rehabilitation Program's policy direction. CCI went from providing "sheltered" workshop services to establishing a community-based supported employment model to assist people with disabilities to become integrated into the mainstream economic community.
- Career Connections' presence has become very visible within Brandon's business community, as well as with other agencies and public institutions in the city. CCI hosts an Employer Appreciation Luncheon every year, with approximately 200 employers and staff in attendance. CCI is also an active member of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce.

D. The Challenge

- Career Connections is constrained by a level of funding from the provincial government that has had a net one per cent increase since 1994/95. The inability to pay experienced staff salaries that are commensurate with their experience contributes to a high staff turnover rate.
- Another challenge faced by CCI and the program participants is that 60% of jobs obtained by participants are entry level positions in the service sector, characterized by being part-time and paying minimum wage or just slightly above. This type of employment does not allow clients to become financially independent.
- It is an on-going challenge to assist participants in obtaining and maintaining employment with enough hours in a week and at salaries high enough to achieve economic independence.

- Although higher paying technical or professional jobs exist in the Brandon area, Career Connections receives few requests for assistance from participants who have higher levels of education or skills.
- Ensuring that communication at all levels is adequate to facilitate seamless services is a priority of the Board of Directors and presents an on-going challenge.
- Many participants require support services that are not directly related to employment. Manitoba Family Services and Housing funding must be used for services that are employment-related, to ensure EAPD cost-sharing. Other types of supports must be funded from other sources.
- A key challenge for CCI is to ensure that the individual needs and abilities of clients are well matched to the needs of employers in the community. The recent acquisition of an assessment tool (System 2000) has proven to be extremely beneficial in overcoming this challenge. Assessments using this tool take the equivalent of five days to complete and cost approximately $650. Government funding covers approximately 50% of the costs associated with the assessment, which affects CCI's ability to offer the assessment to the degree that staff would like. Finding additional resources to cover these costs has been a challenge and affects overall revenue.
- CCI was in a deficit financial position three years ago, but was able to meet this challenge by reducing staff numbers, encouraging an increase in referrals, and generating income from sources outside of its supported employment business.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- Career Connections served a total of 155 individuals during the 2000-01 fiscal year. Of these, 42 clients were on follow-up from the previous year and, therefore, were employed. In addition, jobs were found for 89 new clients, resulting in an employment rate of 85% (131 of the 155 participants). At the end of March 2001, 95 (73%) of these participants were still employed – 77 were still receiving services from CCI while 18 no longer required services. It should be noted that these rates were achieved with very few wage subsidies for employers.
- Of those participants who were deemed to have successfully completed their pre-employment activities with CCI in 2000/01, 79% (89 of 113 new clients) obtained employment. These employment outcomes met or exceeded the objectives stated in the funding agreement (50 – 60%). The wages for these jobs ranged from $6.25 to $21.00 per hour.
- The drop-out rate is approximately 8% of overall enrolment.
- Statistics show that CCI clients' employment rates are not significantly affected by type of disability and tend to range between 70% and 80%.

Qualitative results:

- Community support and awareness of Career Connections is very strong in Brandon. Interviews with employers indicate that they are highly satisfied with the people they have employed through CCI as they have been well matched with employer needs.
- Clients interviewed indicated that they are very pleased with their success and accomplishments as a result of the program. Several felt they had improved their self-esteem and confidence.
- Great attempts have been made to make CCI a cost-effective program. Annual reports indicate that CCI has just completed two years of operation without a deficit. The Board of Directors and the CEO continually look for innovative ways to ensure the cost-effectiveness of the program.
- Many participants will or have recommended this program to others.

The following are comments from CCI's clients regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

"System 2000 opened up opportunities that I never thought of or considered possible."

"I am very happy doing the job that I am doing. The staff make me feel comfortable and welcome."

"The staff at CCI are great! They are willing to listen when needed."

The following are comments made by employers regarding CCI's services:

"System 2000 is a great tool. It is definitely helping to make better matches between CCI clients and my needs."

"I have attrition rates that are at times better for people I hire from CCI!"

"The staff at Career Connections are very flexible. They are willing to come and help out whenever needed."

"I'm delighted with the work that CCI has done over the years!"

"I have seen tremendous improvements in people since I've hired them...they can make amazing strides!"

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- Community-based supported employment allows people with disabilities greater exposure to a wide range of employers as well as a chance to develop employability skills within realistic and supportive employment environments.
- Having a corporate identity and being known within the business community significantly helps CCI in their job development activities and marketing efforts of participants as capable and reliable employees.
- In recent years, Career Connections researched, acquired and started using an innovative assessment tool (System 2000). The tool has almost fully replaced the use of psychometric assessments and is more useful for these purposes. For example, the assessment information has enabled employment counsellors at CCI to provide targeted employment searches matching participants' intellectual, physical and emotional abilities as well as interests. The assessment includes the following core areas:
    - *Compass:* A computerized criterion measuring abilities and aptitudes. The information is used to determine viable job matches.
    - *Occupational Exploration*: Assesses vocational interest and awareness.
    - *Valpar Work Samples*: A hands-on approach to assessing the client's aptitude and reactions to work-related demands.
    - *Occupational Titles*: This database has over 12,000 occupations and job descriptions along with the required aptitudes and temperaments.
- Providing employers with facilitators to assist in job training has proven to be beneficial to clients, CCI and employers. It gives clients time to learn the tasks required and feel comfortable with their own ability to perform as expected. It gives CCI an opportunity to conduct a task analysis and determine the appropriateness of any adaptive aid needed. It also provides the employer with a level of comfort knowing that the person is being trained adequately. This shows employers that CCI is concerned not only about the client but also about employers' business needs as well.
- Open and honest relationships with employers are developed right from the start, which build employers' trust and confidence in CCI placements. It is important that employers know that if any problems arise, CCI will do what it takes to ensure everyone's success.

- Long-term follow-up support for employers is also very beneficial. CCI receives funding from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to support clients and employers for a maximum of three years. During this time period, CCI checks in with the client and employer on a weekly or monthly basis to ensure that expectations are being met on both sides. Should issues arise, CCI takes action, such as providing appropriate interventions to address identified issues. At times, circumstances warrant the withdrawal of the client from the position. The benefit is that the employer develops a sense of trust in CCI's ability to effectively deal with any issues.
- The community's awareness of CCI services is in large part due to the Executive Director and his staff's promotion efforts in various community events throughout the year. One of these events includes the annual 'Employer Appreciation Luncheon', attended by approximately 200 employers and their staff. Employers, as well as people with disabilities who have worked for local employers, are selected to speak and relate stories of success.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- The System 2000 assessment tool is the most up-to-date and comprehensive method of matching individual abilities, skills and likes/dislikes with employment opportunities. Use of this tool is essential for continued success.
- The 'Job Club' course provides valuable training and counselling in the area of career planning, job search strategies and effective communication. The course is essential in assisting clients to prepare for, search for and maintain employment.
- Training in the areas of 'Interpersonal Skills' is also essential. This training assists people with disabilities to set personal goals, communicate (better) with others, build positive relationships, and develop assertiveness skills.
- 'Life Skills' courses provide practical training in basic areas such as money handling, budgeting, banking, housing and rental issues, hygiene issues, personal presentation, nutritional issues, meal planning and time management. Although basic, these life skills are essential to successful integration into society.
- Providing on-the-job training services is essential to long-term success.
- On-going follow-up support for both clients and employers is essential to ensure that employment is maintained for longer durations.
- Participation in community awareness functions (i.e., Employer Appreciation Luncheon) is essential in maintaining relationships with employers.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- Program staff must have an appropriate mix of required skills, expertise, experience and a sincere commitment to help people with disabilities. Together, they must form a strong team of professionals.
- It is important that communication at all levels is always open and honest.
- To provide these services it is essential that the funding covers the costs incurred.
- An organization with a Board of Directors operates the most effectively and efficiently when the Board provides solid leadership.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- CCI plans to ensure there is on-going education and training opportunities for staff so that they are up-to-date with current techniques and methods in employability programming for people with disabilities.
- CCI will continue to find other sources of revenue to contribute to the overall budget and to assist in paying more competitive staff salaries to reduce staff turnover and be in a better position to hire and retain more highly qualified staff.
- The current labour market situation in Brandon is very good. Opportunities for employment have increased significantly in the community. CCI will continue to build strong relationships with employers in the community and search for employment opportunities for their clients.
- CCI receives referrals from several sources. It is necessary to maintain the appropriate levels of communication with the case managers representing these different organizations.

Future Endeavours:

- Career Connections expects that changes and challenges will shape its future endeavours. It is prepared to find innovative ways of assisting its clients to meet the rapidly changing labour market.
- CCI has lived up to its mission statement, met the challenges presented, and will continue to do so in the future.

EAPD[55] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Visible Abilities Registry (VA) (As of April 1st 2002, Visible Abilities registry is being changed to disability Career Recruitment Registry.)
Program/Service Contact:	Tim Wylie P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5H1 Phone: (506) 453-8605 Email: tim.wylie@gnb.ca
Target Group:	Job-ready persons with all types of disabilities.
Delivery Agent:	Province of New Brunswick (Department of Training and Employment Development, Employment Programs).
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 20th and 21st, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- New Brunswick's Department of Training and Employment Development's Employment Services for Person with Disabilities (ESPD) maintains the Visible Abilities (VA) registry of qualified, job-ready people with disabilities[56] (PWD).
- The objectives of the VA registry are to provide employment referrals of people with disabilities to New Brunswick employers and recruit new employers to utilize this service. In addition to the recruitment of employers, ESPD also receives job descriptions directly from employers who have job opportunities available. Staff will then search the VA registry for eligible candidates.
- The VA registry was developed to manage the following:
  a) Client Profiles: These include personal information, type of disability, linguistic ability, level of education or training, summary of employment, and list of practical and computer skills. Also, each client is assigned a National Occupational Code (NOC) to better identify the clients' major career choice.

  b) Employer Profiles: These include contact information, type of business, wage incentives, referrals, and employment retention rate; and

  c) Advocacy Agencies / Service Providers: These include contact information, types of services provided and the specific disability groups that are eligible.

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[55] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

[56] ESPD refers to their clients as Persons with Disabilities or PWD.

Highlights:

At the time of the interviews with ESPD, the VA registry had 938 registrants with various levels of disabilities, education and skills. The following is an overview of the registrants:

a) Disability
   Hearing Impairment (129);
   Multiple (24);
   Intellectual / Learning (151);
   Neurological (96);
   Mental Health (155);
   Other (100);
   Mobility (226); and
   Visual (57).

b) NOC Categories
   Business Administration (293);
   Natural and Applied Science (46);
   Culture and Recreation (40);
   Primary Industries (53);
   Health (24);
   Sales and Service (228);
   Management (14);
   Social Science and Education (81);
   Manufacturing and Utilities (27); and
   Trades and Transport (132).

c) Languages
   American Sign Language (22);
   English (658);
   French (66); and
   Bilingual (184).

d) Education
   Community College (174);
   Some Post Secondary (127);
   Public School (508); and
   University (112).

The VA registry's effectiveness comes from its ability to select very specific search criteria on client and employer profiles as well as advocacy agencies/service providers. For example, if ESPD is screening for an Administrative Assistant position in Westmorland county, a report can be generated to retrieve all eligible candidates in that county who have the skills and meet all criteria as indicated in the job description.

Challenges:

- With the recent decentralization of the province's employment program and services the case management of people with disabilities will now be a regional responsibility. It is therefore vital for ESPD to maintain communication and develop a strong partnership with the regions to ensure that the VA registry remains a valuable tool for creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- It is expected that the new decentralized delivery model will have a positive impact in that it will allow ESPD to enhance the VA registry and at the same time, increase the number of referrals by regional staff as well as maintain the number of referrals from employers.

Results:

- ESPD receives approximately 250 new registrants per year. With the assistance of a provincial wage incentive program, 175 VA clients on average are successful in their employment endeavours.
- The New Brunswick Department of Training and Employment Development has an agreement with the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) to recruit people with disabilities for employment in the federal government. Since PSC opened its recruitment system to utilize the VA registry, PSC has noticed a significant increase in the number of people with disabilities competing for opportunities within the federal government.

Costs:

- ESPD's budget has remained constant at $160,000 to cover all costs related to staff, travel, training and the maintenance of the VA registry.

C. Background and Context

- In 1988, the Visible Abilities Initiative was launched and the registry of persons with disabilities was established. This new initiative was made possible with the assistance and cooperation of the following government departments and agencies: New Brunswick's Human Resources Development, Health and Community Services, Policy Secretariat, Finance, Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons and Human Resources Development Canada. The initiative is housed in and administered by the Department of Training and Employment Development.
- In 1995 the VA Initiative, which included case management, registry of PWDs, employment programs and training, began reporting to ESPD. The registry of people with disabilities adopted the VA designation.

D. The Challenge

- VA registrants have unique employment and social barriers. This factor represents a challenge for employment counsellors and program administrators in that they must identify the needs of both clients and employers, and address any potential barriers. ESPD will provide capacity building training to regional staff and employers on the various disabilities and related issues. This will increase awareness in the communities, which will enhance the opportunities for pwd to obtain gainful employment by assisting in identify and removing barriers.
- New Brunswick has a significant rural population, which generates many challenges in providing services in these areas. These barriers can be diminished with the proper resources and partnerships with regional staff and stakeholders in the communities.
- Wage subsidies were decreased from 26 to 12 weeks in November 2001. The effect of this is that employers may be more reluctant to hire people with disabilities, as there is not enough time to fully train new employees.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- ESPD receives approximately 250 new registrants per year. One hundred and seventy-five VA clients on average are successful in their employment endeavors with the assistance of a provincial wage incentive program.
- About 100 registrants request to be removed from the inventory on a yearly basis as they are now satisfied with their employment status and no longer require the service.
- For the fiscal year 2000-2001, ESPD referred 358 PWD to federal job competitions. Of these individuals, 130 were successful in passing the equivalency exams and will be maintained on the PSC list for future competitions. Fifteen individuals received permanent or casual positions.

Qualitative results:

- The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development used the structure of the registry to set up a database, tracking similar types of information for their clientele.
- The partnership with PSC is regarded as a "best practice" for assisting people with disabilities in finding and keeping employment.
- ESPD has noticed a significant increase in the referrals to the VA registry, as a result of education and awareness training throughout the province on disability issues and services.

The following are comments from clients regarding the impact this service has had on them:

"VA gave me the opportunity to enhance some of the skills I had, including interpersonal skills. My self-confidence is much better as a result"

"Boy, I can't believe how far I've come in five years. I now have a job and skills that I can use in the future".

One VA client wants to start up his own website design company. *"Through jobs and contacts from VA, I will be able to get a good start on my business."*

"VA has opened the door to prove limitations are not there."

"I always leave here feeling better than I was when I got here. I don't really have anywhere else to go to get this feeling."

"I will be a supporter of this program for the rest of my life." VA has been instrumental in keeping me out of the rut."

"Program administrators remember you as a person and not a number."

The following are comments from employers regarding the service provided by VA:

"VA gives experience to clients so they can move on."

"It's a great program and an excellent opportunity to get a start."

"You can teach people the hard skills, but you can't teach people the attitude. That's why job placements are so important".

The following are comments from referral agents regarding VA's services:

"VA gives clients an opportunity to get their foot in the door...it gets them out working."

"VA is client-focused. It helps the person become stabilized in the job."

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- The partnership with PSC is strong and unique in that it provides ESPD with anticipated job competitions prior to being advertised publicly. This process allows ESPD to quickly identify VA registrants that meet the statement of qualifications. Once the eligible candidates have been selected, ESPD submits the Government of Canada employment application forms, attaches their resumes and identifies it is a referral from ESPD. The client is then notified by ESPD that their name has been submitted for a federal government competition.
- ESPD has developed a strong partnership with community stakeholders throughout the province, which has increased the awareness of our service for people with disabilities. For example, many employers in the province know of the VA registry as a result of the awareness activities performed by ESPD and the community stakeholders.
- Service and programs offered by ESPD have shown to break down employment barriers for VA clients as they allow for a "foot in the door". For example, when a visually impaired client had to write a test for a job position, ESPD provided a computer with a voice recognition program as well as arranging for someone who could read the text to him.
- The working relationship that ESPD has established with the VA registrant has contributed to ESPD's success and is highly appreciated by the clients.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- It is essential for ESPD, regional staff, and stakeholders to have a good working relationship, and share resources for the success of the VA registry.
- ESPD must maintain and update VA information on a regular basis. It is also important to continue to recruit new candidates for the registry and to continuously generate new employment opportunities.
- ESPD has developed a positive relationship with the VA registrants. This is a priority for continued success of the registry.
- Sharing success stories of VA clients that have demonstrated their abilities to employers and that have contributed to the success of the business is an important awareness raising activity.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- Develop an effective marketing strategy to break down employment and attitudinal barriers for VA clients.
- It is important to generate new employment opportunities; e.g., establishing partnerships with other government departments that are responsible for attracting new companies to locate to the province.
  This would enable ESPD an opportunity to market the skilled and job ready people with disabilities that are in the VA registry.
- Education and awareness training session on various disabilities and related issues to assist regional staff and stakeholders in providing services to people with disabilities is indispensable to the success of the registry. This approach should benefit the VA registry by increasing the number of referrals from the regional staff and stakeholders in the communities.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- ESPD will continue to produce and analyze statistical information generated from the VA registry.
- ESPD will continue to do database maintenance as well as recruit new candidates for the VA registry.
- ESPD will continue to develop strong partnerships with employers and regional offices, which will enhance services for people with disabilities and in turn, benefit clients in the VA registry.

Future Endeavours:

- ESPD would like to establish new partnerships with other government departments that are responsible for attracting new or existing companies to locate in New Brunswick. This would generate a great opportunity for ESPD to market the VA registry to these potential employers.
- ESPD will consult with New Brunswick's Equal Employment Opportunity program to determine if it is viable to develop a shared database that meets the needs of both parties.
- ESPD plans to research and review employment services for people with disabilities in other provinces and determine if there is an opportunity to enhance its services.

EAPD[57] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Assessment of EAPD applicants with Learning Disabilities (LD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
Program/Service Contact:	André McConnell, Program Administration Officer 5675 Spring Garden Road Nelson Place, 6th floor PO Box 696 Halifax, NS, B3J 2T7 Phone: (902) 424-1537 email: mcconnaa@gov.ns.ca
Target Group:	EAPD applicants claiming LD/ADHD.
Delivery Agent:	Combination of EAPD Counsellors and Consultants with the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 18th and 19th, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- In order for individuals with LD or ADHD to receive EAPD funding to enhance their skills through education or training programs, they need to first have a psycho-educational assessment done. Once this assessment is complete and the client has been found to have a learning disability, EAPD Counsellors will use a structured interview approach to collect additional information, which will assure that documentation is appropriate to verify client eligibility and to support requests for services and training. The structured interview tool used by EAPD counsellors is the focus of this Promising Practice.
- Once EAPD counsellors have administered the LD/ADHD interview tool, the results will be forwarded to an external consultant (psychologist). The consultant will review all the information provided as well as the EAPD Agreement to prepare a concise report which highlights the course of action, supports, etc. that will benefit clients in pursuing their educational and career goals. The report is then used by the EAPD counsellor to create an educational strategy with the client to share with the Rehabilitation Programs and Services of the Department of Education. This Department is responsible for arranging for specialized training equipment and supports, or providing subsidized funding for post-secondary education.
- The reason for developing the LD/ADHD interview tool was to identify the required supports for clients to be successful. The interview yields information, which improves the Department's ability to provide the appropriate services, which in turn improves clients' employment potential.

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[57] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

Highlights:

- The LD/ADHD interview tool assists the external consultant and EAPD counselors to develop, with the client, realistic training and career planning goals that will lead the client to success.
- This interview tool allows counsellors who are not experts on learning disabilities to gather accurate and appropriate documentation for each client who goes through this process. This has made the process much more efficient than it used to be, as files are more complete when sent to the consultant for review.

Challenges:

- In order to verify eligibility and support requests for services and training, counsellors need relevant and complete supporting documentation. In addition to the requirement for the results of a psycho-educational assessment, clients are encouraged to bring any additional documentation related to their learning disability (i.e. school records, other test results).
- It is a challenge to ensure that all people with learning disabilities have access to services. For example, the cost of the psycho-educational assessment is covered as long as clients are in school or on social assistance. Otherwise, clients need to cover these costs themselves, which on average can cost from $1,200 to $1,800. Counsellors will try to find alternative sources of funding to finance this assessment to open the door to EAPD services although other sources are very limited.
- There is no central database that identifies how many clients have gone through the LD/ADHD interview tool to date nor how many have been successful in pursuing their educational and training or employment goals. The lack of centralized information makes it hard to determine the overall success of the interview tool.

Results:

- This Promising Practice has not yet compiled results from the use of the LD/ADHD interview tool. Consequently, the results achieved pertain to the qualitative aspects of EAPD program staff, counsellors' and consultant's work with this population.
- The interview tool has been in use for 18 months. Once the clients who went through the interview process have completed their post-secondary education, EAPD staff will acquire greater insight into the validity and usefulness of the tool.
- The advantage of this interview tool is that clients, with the assistance of their counsellors, have an enhanced opportunity to set realistic training and employment goals. Counsellors are aware of their clients' rights to decide for themselves, whether their goal is realistic or not from the counsellor's point of view.

Costs:

- There are approximately 150 clients who go through the LD/ADHD interview process on an annual basis. Based on this number, it is estimated that the process costs, on average, approximately $325 per case, including the counsellors and external consultant's time.

C. Background and Context

- The LD/ADHD interview tool was developed as a result of an increasing number of referrals of people with LD/ADHD to the EAPD program. With an increase in referrals it became clear that a more specialized consultation process was required to better help clients develop their potential for employment.
- To address this requirement, a psychologist (external to the Department of Community Services) was hired on a fee per service basis to consult in the EAPD intake process of clients with LD/ADHD. As the process evolved, the consultant developed an interview tool to help counsellors better assist clients enhance their employment potential. The tool was piloted in three sites and shown to be beneficial. Over its 18 months in existence, the tool has been adopted by EAPD counsellors across the province.

- Community awareness of what it means to have a learning disability has increased drastically over the last years. Efforts to identify and accommodate children with learning disabilities are now observed in elementary schools. The result is that someone with a learning disability may receive assistance early on in their lives, allowing them to better cope in the long run. The majority (approximately 90%) of EAPD clients who go through this interview process are students coming out of high school.

D. The Challenge

- A client must have had a psycho-educational assessment done within the last three years before being considered as EAPD eligible. While the cost of this psycho-educational assessment is covered for clients who are in school or on social assistance, others must pay for this service. Many clients cannot afford this assessment, which means they are not eligible for EAPD funding to cover education and training costs to set the stage for employment.
- Sometimes it is a challenge for EAPD counsellors to acquire the required documentation for clients who have been out of school for some time and may not have had any assessment in the past. In order to verify if a claimant is EAPD eligible, supporting documentation is highly important in determining whether a client should proceed with the psycho-educational assessment.
- EAPD program staff are interested in evaluating the impact of clients who have gone through the interview process. However, due to limited resources and challenges related to operationalizing such an evaluation (i.e. clients are not aware of the structured interview per se as it is a step in the direction of the desired outcomes such as training, employment plans, etc.), this has not yet been done.
- To provide these services, counsellors must be up-to-date on issues related to learning disabilities and employability programming for people with learning disabilities. Information and training workshops on these general topics are available to counsellors. However, the challenge is to ensure that workshop/course availability is communicated to the appropriate individuals.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- Because the LD/ADHD interview tool has only been used for 18 months, it is still too early to determine the impact of the interview process (i.e. whether clients received the supports required to successfully complete their program, successful completion of post-secondary education, employment status). EAPD administration hopes to be able to follow up with clients as part of the process in the future.
- This interview process has proved particularly effective for students coming out of school. Since many of them have current psycho-educational assessments, they are able to qualify for EAPD programs and services. Clients who qualify for EAPD and who would like to pursue post-secondary education are eligible for funding to cover disability supports as required as well as funding for tuition and books (approximately $3,500 for university students and $2,500 for community college students).

Qualitative results:

- Counsellors interviewed have found that those diagnosed with a learning disability early in life (i.e. at the elementary school level) and have a supportive family, have more success in education and employment programs.
- This interview tool has improved the quality and completeness of the information forwarded to the consultant for review. This has allowed for more efficient use of all staff's time.
- One of the tool's strengths is its ability to identify any inconsistencies in a client's statements. Counsellors are thereby able to pick up on inaccurate information, and probe further if needed.

The following are comments from counsellors on the usefulness of the assessment tool:

- *"Very few programs are available for people with learning disabilities. This is the 'only game in town'. As a result, it is important to have a good tool to make sure we place people in the right programs."*
- *"I received letters from parents and students that said they wouldn't have gotten through without this program."*
- Some counsellors believe many people with learning disabilities are being missed, *"Because there are so many referrals, counsellors are too busy and don't necessarily have the time to hit the streets and market this service."*
- *"The assessment tool shows examples of where a person is weak and where their disability lies."*
- *"This service should bring people with learning disabilities to light and to the attention of school officials."*

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- In order to maximize the information gleaned from the LD/ADHD interview tool, counsellors may break up the interview process over a couple of days to not overwhelm the client. This has worked well for the Practice.
- The tool offers consistency in the questions asked, something that was not achieved in the past. Previously, counsellors would use questions from several questionnaires and some important questions would be lost in the mix. The structured process, with all the pertinent questions, has come a long way to streamline the intake process for EAPD applicants with LD/ADHD.
- The ultimate goal of this Practice is for the client to acquire employment. Files are therefore not closed until the client has had a sustainable job for at least three months. The client has access to adaptive aids through this Practice and can contact the counsellor for other job prospects for up to three years after the completion of the career development plan.
- There is a good distribution of counsellors across Nova Scotia. Also, counsellors in rural areas will travel to applicants who do not have a car or where there is no bus transportation to make sure the service is accessible to all.
- Some counsellors visit high school guidance counsellors to make schools aware of EAPD programs and services and of eligibility criteria such as the psycho-educational assessment.
- EAPD counsellors have noticed an improved quality of information provided to them from the schools. It is rare that they have to go back to the schools to get additional information, and attribute this to enhanced communications between them and the schools.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- Complete client documentation is essential for the success of the interview process. As a result, the relationship between the Department of Community Services and schools must be maintained.
- Having staff that are knowledgeable about learning disabilities and are comfortable with the LD/ADHD interview tool is essential.
- Communication between the Department of Community Services and Department of Education is most important. After acceptance into the EAPD program, a client's file is forwarded to the Rehabilitation programs and Services division of the Department of Education who determine the amount the funding amount a client qualifies for to cover tuition and books.
- Counsellors feel that schools should have a set of standard procedures in the area of collecting information and keeping records of students with possible learning disabilities. As it stands now, there does not appear to be a consistent process to collect and keep information.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- There needs to be sufficient resources committed to the process if it is to be successful. Staffing shortages are an issue, as there are long lags in replacing counsellors who leave their positions. Also, since counsellors have a heavy caseload, there is little or no time for follow-up with clients.
- Counsellors must keep up to date on information about learning disabilities and new adaptive technologies for people with disabilities.
- It is important to develop a centralized administrative database so stakeholders as well as program administrators can access program information as is necessary.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- Counsellors will continue to try to find ways to help the "working poor" get funding to get a psycho-educational assessment to determine the extent of the learning disability. This group cannot always afford this assessment, nor can they receive social assistance to fund the assessment as they earn more than the maximum income allowed.
- Counsellors will keep working with schools and parents to identify students with learning disabilities earlier in life so the proper supports can get in place to assist them.
- The program administrator and external consultant will continue to enhance their efforts in keeping counsellors up-to-date with information about learning disabilities.

Future Endeavors:

- EAPD staff will continue working with the Department of Education to enhance the partnership and to further clarify their respective roles.
- The Department of Community Services is developing a central database to access client information and other relevant statistics. This will assist the Department in determining the effectiveness of the tool in the future. Currently, all statistics are kept in each client's individual file and have to be manually calculated to show a global picture.
- Some counsellors would like to see the LD/ADHD assessment tools used at an earlier stage to help identify students' type of learning disabilities, and thereby be able to develop an education plan as early as possible.

EAPD[58] Promising Practices Report

A. Promising Practice Title and Description

Promising Practice Title:	Networking Employment Opportunities NOW (NEON), Southern Kings Health Region of Prince Edward Island
Program/Service Contact:	Mike Kelly Southern Kings Health PO Box 1500 Montague PE, C0A 1R0 Phone: 902-838-0716 Email: mtkelly@ihis.org
Target Group:	People with disabilities and workplace injuries in Southern Kings Health Region of Prince Edward Island.
Delivery Agent:	Various partnerships coordinated through the NEON Committee.
Promising Practice Interview Dates:	February 25th and 26th, 2002

B. Promising Practice Overview

Scope and Purpose:

- NEON is a committee consisting of 13 members. Its members represent a variety of different organizations with the common purpose of assisting people with disabilities and workplace injuries to integrate into the labour force.
- This partnership was established to coordinate services and responses to issues pertaining to people with disabilities and workplace injuries that previously had proved challenging for a single organization to address effectively on its own. Activities include networking with employers to improve awareness of the contribution their clients can make to a company, enhance clients' access to employment opportunities and offer preparation programs to assist clients entering or re-entering the labour market.
- The committee comes together once a month to discuss approaches to improve overall services for people with disabilities and workplace injuries within the community.

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[58] Promising Practices are eligible for cost sharing under Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD), which is a bilateral funding agreement between Human Resources Development Canada and individual provinces.

Highlights:

- NEON invited members of the community to its first strategic planning workshop to clarify the committee's direction and to identify the needs of people with disabilities and workplace injuries in the Southern Kings Health Region to be better able to meet their needs.
- NEON has run two successful programs to date: NEO (Networking for Employment Options) and ROSE (Rural Outreach Supported Employment). NEO responds to a need for clients to learn the skills required to approach an employer, while ROSE reflects a need for clients to have a job coach at the worksite. Both programs were created to fill a programming gap in the community.
- The ROSE program has been particularly successful in responding to the Region's rural population. The program offered one-on-one and small group counselling sessions in the client's homes and assisted clients to find and develop supports in their own communities.

Challenges:

- NEON members are already fully engaged with their representative organizations. As a result, they have a finite amount of time to dedicate to NEON-related activities, making it challenging to meet targets and deadlines.
- Since NEON is located in a rural area, it is challenging to reach their target group.
- Transportation is another challenge common to many rural areas. NEON's clients often rely on friends and family as there is no public transportation, which is not sufficient to allow them to get to and from work and training.
- Due to the seasonal nature of many employment opportunities on Prince Edward Island, it is a challenge to find work opportunities that evolve into full-time work.
- It is a challenge to get employers, community representatives and those with disabilities more involved with this service.

Results:

- Due to networking between agencies and employers, there has been an increase in the number of workplace experience sites for people with disabilities and workplace injuries in the Southern Kings region.
- Clients are beginning to be requested to return to seasonal employment and some have found part-time employment. These results are based on clients doing a good job while at the worksite and because they were trained prior to being sent out to the worksite. The job coach's ongoing support has also assisted in client employment retention.
- People with disabilities and workplace injuries who were interviewed and went through the NEO or ROSE programs prior to finding a job placement indicated they now feel more confident in seeking employment.

Costs:

- NEON received approximately $44,570 in funding from provincial and federal governments for the ROSE and NEO programs. Eighteen clients participated in these workshops.
- The cost per participant for these programs is approximately $2,250 for the NEO workshop and $1,450 for the ROSE program.

C. Background and Context

- As many as 1,400 individuals in the Southern Kings area have a disability, including those that have sustained workplace injuries.
- The Southern Kings area has a number of organizations that serve people with disabilities and workplace injuries, but there was a lack of communication and coordination of efforts between them. The NEON committee was formed in 1996 with representation from federal and provincial governments, community-based non-profit organizations and other programs. It aims to avoid duplication of services and enhance the work already being done in the region to increase and enhance the employability of people who have had difficulties finding and maintaining employment.
- It was recognized that there was a gap in the services offered by the various organizations in the community related to the provision of employment training opportunities. As a result, NEON developed the NEO and ROSE programs to fill this gap.
- In order to enhance the communications and the coordination efforts of the service providers in the area, NEON meets once a month to share information, network with other committee members and develop programs to assist people with disabilities and workplace injuries to find and keep work.

D. The Challenge

- It can be challenging to get all committee members to attend meetings once a month to discuss issues, possible solutions and up-coming events. NEON's success in meeting its objectives depends on the full participation of all members.
- Educating employers in the region on the contribution that people with disabilities and workplace injuries can make to a company and the community represents a challenge. Stigmatism and misconceptions about people with disabilities' ability to work represent a major challenge.
- The Southern Kings region has many seasonal employment opportunities. This represents a challenge for people with disabilities and workplace injuries who require a high degree of support and assistance in that seasonal work often requires intense activity over a short period of time.
- The rural nature of the province brings additional challenges in assisting people with disabilities and workplace injuries to find employment. The NEON committee is faced with finding a solution to overcome the transportation barrier. Because of the rural nature of the Southern Kings region in particular and of the province in general, public transportation is very limited. Clients' lack of self-confidence, which prohibits them from pursuing alternative transportation opportunities such as calling a neighbour to drive them to work, compounds this challenge.
- It has proved highly challenging for NEON to acquire statistics on the number of clients served, areas of spending and clients' funding sources. When this was attempted, there were several cases where clients were counted as many as three times.

E. The Results

Outcomes:

- NEON does not have any current statistics on the number of clients served and on results. An employer survey (N=51) was conducted in 1998, and provided the following information:
  - Many employers indicated that they did not understand the definition of "people with disability". For example, many thought it was solely the loss of a limb;
  - Eleven employers had hired people with disabilities;
  - Most employers were satisfied with NEON clients' work performance. Of the 26 clients hired by one or more employers, employers were satisfied with the performance of 24 of these and only dissatisfied with two clients;
  - Of the clients on work placement who were still working there when the survey was done, 17 became regular employees. Of these, 11 were hired full-time, while the remaining were hired part-time and/or for the season; and
  - Of the various supports available to employers, employability skills training to clients and financial incentives to the employer (53% and 52% respectively) were seen as the most helpful supports by employers. Job carving (30%), or adapting a job position for people with disabilities, was rated third. Thirty-five employers would consider hiring the individual if these services were in place.

Qualitative results:

- The ROSE program's job-coaching initiative was seen as very successful by clients who needed extra guidance and support. As a result of its success, this concept is now being offered on a regular basis through Employment Pathways. Employment Pathways is a Southern Kings Health initiative assisting individuals with multi-barriers to employment. The NEON Committee members and program structure has greatly enhanced the Pathways Model and the Program's overwhelming success. Other regions on the Island have also adopted this model.

- Employers are generally impressed with the skills people with disabilities have brought to their worksite. Clients are being asked to return to seasonal employment. Several have acquired part-time employment. This success is due to clients' solid performance and additional training.

- Clients indicate that NEON has opened many doors for people with disabilities and workplace injuries. Many clients specifically mention that NEON's programs have boosted their confidence to seek employment opportunities.

The following are comments from NEON clients regarding the impact that the program has had on them:

- *"When someone is talking for you, for a person with a disability, it's good help...when you go out on your own, the doors close pretty fast."*
- *"NEO gave me a lift. It told me what I could do and showed me that I should maybe try something else."*

The following are comments from employers regarding NEON's services and clients:

- *"I haven't been asked, but I would take someone on if requested."*
- *"I hated to see him go. If I had a choice, I would keep him."* The client was laid off because of company downsizing.
- *"Unless there is something wrong upstairs, hiring people with disabilities wouldn't be a problem."* This comment reflects the opinion of one employer, and illustrates a perception that is not uncommon.

F. What Works Well in This Promising Practice

- NEON consists of members representing different agencies and organizations. As a result, the committee is in a particularly good position to share pertinent information across numerous organization providing employment and employability services for people with disabilities and workplace injuries. This information can relate to training, funding, workshops and employment placements. This networking is NEON's biggest asset.
- This committee structure allows NEON to identify client groups to develop programs to suit their employment needs. Also, the various funding agencies represented on the committee may share the costs in funding clients' employment training or education requests.
- NEON's community representation and regular meetings go a long way to prevent clients from "slipping through the cracks."
- Other regions on Prince Edward Island are looking to or have started to use NEON's format. For example, Eastern Kings Health Region and Queens Health Region have both established similar groups.
- NEON's Strategic Plans were developed in 1998 and 2000 with the input of clients living in the community. This allows NEON to provide services that are needed by the people they serve. This also provides an accountability structure between NEON and their client group.
- It is important that program participants learn that they are themselves responsible for finding work and that they need to pursue the opportunities themselves.

Critical Success Factors:

Essential services that are required for success:

- The close relationship between NEON committee members is highly important in assisting people with disabilities in finding funding for education and training programs as well as job placements and continued support on the job. A client does not have to go to numerous agencies with their questions and requests, and as a result, it cuts down on the time and effort needed on their part to find out what is available as well as which employers to approach.
- Raising community awareness of the programs available is important, as members of the target group are not always aware of the services available to them. Committee members are reaching out to the community by speaking at various functions (Lions' Club, Rotary Club) and publishing "Success Stories" in the monthly publication called "Employment Journey".
- Networking with employers in the region to develop relationships that can lead to work opportunities for NEON's clients is essential to success.
- Educating employers is highly important to achieving success for NEON. Many have negative perceptions of people with disabilities and workplace injuries.

To provide these essential services, the following is required:

- It is essential that all committee members be open with each other in terms of what services are available to which client groups, at what cost, etc. Members must cooperate and not compete with each other.
- On-going communications between all committee members is important. To make sure that all members are aware of NEON's activities, meeting minutes are circulated. Should NEON become larger and organize more activities, a coordinator will be needed to manage the team.
- Transportation is a major issue for people with disabilities and workplace injuries in rural areas. In the absence of adequate public transportation, clients are often not able to take advantage of employment-related programming and employment opportunities. NEON has implemented short-term fixes, but transportation remains an issue to be fully addressed.
- In order to provide relevant and adequate services to clients, there must be an understanding of the clients' limitations and opportunities. Many NEON committee members do assessments in their respective organizations. These assessments assist NEON in identifying what programs currently exist to meet clients' needs as well as any gaps NEON could fill.

G. Next Steps for the Promising Practice

On-going Activities:

- NEON will continue to bring employment programming and support organizations together to enhance and streamline the various initiatives targeted at people with disabilities and workplace injuries.
- Committee members will continue to approach employers in the region to foster an integrated community approach to employment support and services for their target group. Members will continue to organize luncheons with employers as well as meeting with organizations such as the Lion's Club and Three Rivers Business Association to discuss opportunities for hiring people with disabilities and workplace injuries.
- NEON will continue to share "Success Stories" with employers and the community.
- A NEON committee member also sits on the two newly established committees in Queens Region (Charlottetown) and Eastern Kings Region (Souris) modelled after NEON to provide guidance and share any lessons learned.

Future Endeavours:

- NEON is committed to finding a long-term solution for the transportation issue.
- NEON continues to develop programs to address the issue of job development for people with disabilities and workplace injuries.
- NEON will develop a Strategic Plan for 2002-2004 in addition to comparing the commitments made two years ago in the current strategic plan with the activities that actually took place.
- NEON would like to see employers, clients and representatives from educational institutions on the committee and is planning on finding a way to make this happen, realizing that committee membership demands time and effort that many of these may not have.
- NEON would like to reach out to youth with disabilities while they are still in school to enable these to finish school and get work experience. This will enhance their chances of a future with employment opportunities.

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Appendix C: Research Instruments

Draft Interview Guide
Participants/Family members

Good morning/afternoon/evening,

My name is _________ and I work for PwC Consulting. You were asked by the program co-ordinator of (program name) to see if you would participate in an interview with me to discuss how you find the program.

I am working with the provincial and federal governments to evaluate the (program name). What you tell me will help me learn what you think about the program. What worked for you? What did not? And why?

The information you give us as well as that given to us by other program participants will be written up in a report to help the people running this program get a better sense of what people think of the services they provide.

Before we begin, I would like to reconfirm that this interview is voluntary. So, if you choose not to go on with the interview, you will not lose any of the supports you receive by the program or any other supports.

Just so that you know, everything you tell me will be kept confidential and no names will be marked on any interview notes.

The interview should take approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Are we okay to proceed?

Do you have any question before we get started?

Note to Interviewer: Regular font – Questions for Participants
Italics – Questions for Family Members
Bold – Questions for both Participants and Family Members

Introduction

	Former participants
1. **Could you begin by telling me how you found out about this program and what made you decide to participate?**	✓
2. **How long have you been participating in the program? What kinds of services are you receiving from this program?**	✓How long did you… ✓What services did you…
3. At this time, do you have a job as a result of this program?	✓Did you get a job…
4. (If yes), Are you doing the kind of work you like?	✓

Results

	Former participants
5. **What do you hope to get out of this program?**	
6. **(*If currently employed)* How does this program continue to help you?**	✓How did this program…
7. **Have you been involved with any other programs that are similar to this one? If so, how does this program differ from the other one?**	✓

Success and Challenges

	Former participants
8. What kinds of barriers make it difficult for you to get and/or keep a job/work? Please describe. How has this program helped you with these barriers/difficulties?	✓ ✓How did this program…
9. **Has this program helped you (your family member) to feel more comfortable / confident in finding work or going to work? Do you have any experiences you can share?**	✓How did this program…

10. Since you (your family member) started in this program, have you noticed any changes in work related skills?	✓After you finished the program, did you notice…
11. Do you use any supports? Are these supports readily available to you? (i.e., transportation, day-care, adaptive aids, support groups, etc…)	✓
12. Does your participation in this program mean that you get less income support from the government?	✓When you participated in this program, did you…
13. Has your participation in this program changed the support you receive? (i.e., transportation, day-care, adaptive aids, support groups, etc…) In what way has it changed?	✓Did your participation …
14. Do you feel that there is enough program staff to help you when you need it? Please explain and provide examples if possible.	✓Were there…

Critical Success Factors (Challenges Remaining/Suggested Improvements)

	Former participants
15. What do you like about this program? Please describe.	✓ What did you…
16. Should anything be changed?	✓
17. What improvements, if any, could be made to the structure of the program?	
18. How would these changes benefit you and your family member's needs?	

The Future

	Former participants
19. How long do you think you would like to be involved with this program?	
20. Would you recommend this program to your friends or family?	✓

Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any questions or comments?

Draft Interview Guide
Program Administrators/Third Party Deliverers/Employers

Good morning/afternoon/evening,

My name is _____________ and I work for PwC Consulting in Ottawa. As you may know, PwC Consulting has been contracted by Human Resources Development Canada and your provincial government to evaluate the success of the (program name). This evaluation is an important first step in building a knowledge base regarding the program's operational effectiveness that will contribute to more comprehensive evaluation activities in the future.

The (program name) has been selected as a 'Promising Practice' in promoting and facilitating employment / employability for people with disabilities. As such, your program is regarded as highly successful in addressing issues commonly facing people with disabilities, using practices that are applicable in other settings and capable of producing measurable client impacts.

The objectives of this interview are to identify and document your success and challenges.

Before we begin, I would like to reconfirm that this interview is voluntary and should take approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Also, this is a confidential interview and the information you provide will only be presented in an aggregated form so that comments cannot be attributed to a specific individual. No name will be marked on any interview notes. Once the interviews are complete, we will develop a summary report that synthesizes key findings.

Do you have any question before we get started?

Note to interviewer: Regular font – Questions for Program Administrators/Third Party Deliverers
Italics – Questions for Employers
Bold – Questions for both Program Administrators/ Third Party Deliverers and Employers

Introduction

1. How long have you been actively involved with this particular program? What is your current role/function in relation to the program?

2. Could you please provide me with a brief description of the *(name of program)?* (Including: background and context, target group, any delivery agents, etc…)

Results

3. What is your understanding of the program goals and objectives?

   3.1 Are the goals and objectives measured in this program? How are they measured?

4. In what way does this program represent an innovative or unique approach to employability programming for people with disabilities?

5. In your opinion, has this program produced the positive results anticipated for participants? How/why?

6. **What kind of feedback have you solicited from participants to verify that you have produced positive results? (Surveys, letters, interviews, etc.)**

7. How do you ensure that participant skills and interests are matched to employers' requests?

   7.1 How well do you think participants' skills and interests match your requests?

8. **Has this program been proven to be cost effective? What quantitative measures, if any, have been used to determine this?**

Success and Challenges

9. How does the program reach its target population? What activities are essential to reach and maintain the target population?

10. Would you say that this program is 'individualized' or tailored to meet the specific needs of each person? How is this done?

11. Is the current staff arrangement adequate to deliver the program/services efficiently and effectively?

12. What barriers preventing the full participation of people with disabilities in the workplace does your program try to minimize?

    12.1 What barriers preventing the full participation of people with disabilities in the workplace has your organization minimized through your participation in the program?

13. Have you created/adapted positions within your organization to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities? How?

14. How responsive are employers and other stakeholders in supporting this program? In what way has the awareness of the program been promoted in the community?

    14.1 How were you made aware of this program? In what way is this program promoted?

15. Have you noticed an increase or decline in the participation/enrolment in the program? What main reasons are cited for withdrawal from the program?

16. Is on-going support provided to participants after their initial goals have been met? If so, what does this support consist of? (follow-up assessments, support groups, awareness, communications, etc…)

17. Is the level of communication between the various stakeholders adequate to ensure seamless service? (Federal/provincial governments, employers, advocates, various types of participants, program staff, official languages related) Where are there communication gaps, if any?

18. Does your provincial government provide you with the information and support that you need to deliver services to your participant group? How?

19. What are the biggest challenges in successfully operating this program?

20. *What has your experience been in terms of hiring an employee from this program?*

21. *How would you describe the interaction between program participants and other members of your staff?*

Critical Success Factors (Challenges Remaining/Suggested Improvements)

22. **In your opinion, what do you see as critical for ensuring continued success of this program?**

23. **Since this program has been in existence, what lessons have you learned? (project management, human resource management, attrition and retention, awareness, partnership with community employers, participant groups, etc.)**

The Future

24. **What is needed to maintain or expand the program?**

25. **Do you think aspects of your program can be successfully adopted by other organizations to provide similar services to people with disabilities? Which ones and why or why not?**

26. **What are the long-term goals of your program? What are the things you need to do to get there (short-term goals)?**

Do you have any documentation you could share with us that would be useful in writing up the case study? Such documents can include annual reports, strategic plans, assessment and evaluation reports, etc.

Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any questions or comments?

Draft Interview Guide
Provincial Government Representatives

Good morning/afternoon/evening.

My name is _____________ and I work for PwC Consulting in Ottawa. As you may know, PwC Consulting has been contracted by Human Resources Development Canada and your provincial government to evaluate the success of the (program name). This evaluation is an important first step in building a knowledge base regarding the program's operational effectiveness that will contribute to more comprehensive evaluation activities in the future.

The (program name) has been selected as a 'Promising Practice' in promoting and facilitating employability for people with disabilities. As such, this program is regarded as highly successful in addressing issues commonly facing people with disabilities. We expect to find that your program uses practices that are applicable in other settings and is capable of producing measurable client impacts.

The objectives of this interview are to identify and document challenges and solutions, and results.

Before we begin, I would like to reconfirm that this interview is voluntary and should take approximately half an hour.

Also, this is a confidential interview and the information you provide will only be presented in an aggregated form so that comments cannot be attributed to a specific individual. No name will be marked on any interview notes. Once the interviews are complete, we will develop a summary report that synthesizes key findings.

Do you have any question before we get started?

Introduction

1. How long have you been actively involved with this particular program? What is your current role/function in relation to the program?
2. Could you please provide me with a brief description of the (*name of program*)? (Including: background and context, target group, any delivery agents, etc…)

Results

3. What are the factors that make/ made you nominate (*program name*) a "Promising Practice"? How is it innovative and/or unique?

Barriers and Challenges/Strengths

4. From your perspective, what makes an employment related program for people with disabilities successful? (Probe: different client types)
5. How can the (*program name*) be improved upon?

Critical Success Factors (Challenges Remaining/Suggested Improvements)

6. What critical success factors must be in place in order to enhance employment and employability opportunities and supports for persons with disabilities?
7. What are the areas where different orders of government need to continue working together on? (i.e., multilateral frameworks, harmonizing disability related benefits, workers' compensation, etc…)

The Future

8. What future developments will be necessary to ensure employment opportunities for people with disabilities? What barriers must be overcome and what must be done to break these down?

Thank you very much for your time. Do you have any questions or comments?

Appendix D: Pre-assessment Checklist

(TO BE COMPLETED BY NOMINATOR)

NAME OF PRACTICE **LOCATION:**
SUBMITTED BY:
ORGANIZATION:
DATE: **PHONE:** **EMAIL:**

EAPD PROMISING PRACTICES PRE-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

YES (Y) NO (N)

A. RELEVANCE TO EAPD PRIORITIES

1 Is this practice[59] part of a program/service that is currently cost-shared under EAPD?
2 Does this practice help clients prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment in labour market?

B. INNOVATIVE/UNIQUE

3 Does this practice represent an innovative or unique approach or activity?
4 Would your peers consider that the practice uses innovative ideas, approaches, processes or technology as a solution to a problem or a client need?

C. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

5 Does the program/service have clearly stated objectives and goals?
6 Does this practice help to attain the program's objectives/goals?
7 In your opinion, does this practice produce superior results for clients?
8a Has quantitative evidence been measured or collected regarding this practice?
(Please check all that apply)

- ☑ Number of new participants per year
- ☑ Number of completions per year
- ☐ Employment status at entry
- ☑ Number of participants either obtaining employment or moving on to next phase of their plan
- ☑ Number of participants maintained in employment upon completion
- ☑ Rate of attrition
- ☑ Evaluation data
- ☐ Participant satisfaction surveys
- ☑ Cost per participant
- ☐ Cost/benefit analysis
- ☐ Other (please specify)______________________

8b Has the practice demonstrated cost effectiveness?

---

[59] The term "practice" refers to the intervention(s) targeted for study. In some instances, a promising practice may be an entire program or service; in others, it may represent just one component of a broader program.

EAPD PROMISING PRACTICES PRE-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

9 Has qualitative evidence been measured or collected regarding this practice?
(Please check all that apply)
- ☐ Focus group studies
- ☑ Documented interview findings
- ☐ Academic articles
- ☐ Awards and citations
- ☐ Newspaper or magazine articles
- ☐ TV or radio specials
- ☐ Letters of recommendation from the community
- ☑ Letters of endorsement from former participants/family members
- ☑ Other (please specify) year end report and statistics

9a Is client feedback regarding the practice positive?
9b Is this practice acknowledged as being successful by peers and key stakeholders?
10 Does the practice contribute to a higher quality of service (e.g., timely service, knowledgeable and competent staff, fair and equitable service)?
11 Based on your own experience and knowledge, does the practice make a difference in overall impact to the client and/or citizens? (i.e., Does the practice demonstrate cost-effectiveness or a positive impact on quality of life or environment for the individuals, groups or communities concerned)

D. IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

12 Does the practice demonstrate effective partnerships (e.g., between clients, family, educational institutions, public, private, voluntary, or civic sectors of society)?

E. REPLICABILITY

13 Can the practice be adapted to other organizations or situations?
14 Has the practice been used successfully in a variety of situations or in other communities?

F. DOCUMENTATION

15 Has the practice been formally evaluated (e.g., by management, an external agency)?
16 Is this practice adequately documented with accurate and verifiable information?

TOTAL (Yes) /19

☑ **Score 13 or more** - - Initiative is probably a very worthy *promising practice* candidate. You are encouraged to obtain program consent (below) and complete and submit the promising practice template.

☐ **Score 8 to 12**- - Initiative is a relatively sound *promising practice* candidate but may be missing some key information for good practice documentation. Please use your best judgment in deciding whether or not to submit for promising practice consideration. If you decide to proceed, please obtain program consent (below) and submit the promising practice template.

EAPD PROMISING PRACTICES PRE-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

☐ **Score 7 or less** - - Initiative likely does not meet the identification and documentation requirements that would qualify it for a promising practice at this time. However, if you believe that the practice has potential as a promising practice, and would benefit from this documentation for learning purposes, please obtain program consent and submit the template for review. Please also provide brief rationale for inclusion:

____

____

PROGRAM CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I consent to having my organization participate in the EAPD promising practices study.

______________________________ **(Signature of program authority)**

______________________________ **(Date)**

(To be completed by each member of the EAPD PROMISING PRACTICES PROJECT COMMITTEE)

NAME OF PRACTICE: ___________________________________

Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where "1" means strongly disagree and "5" means strongly agree. Circle your rating.

A. RELEVANCE TO EAPD PRIORITIES

1 This practice is consistent with the goals of EAPD (i.e., this practice help clients prepare for, obtain, or maintain employment in labour market)

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

B. EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

2 The pre-assessment information submitted is sufficiently informative to proceed with further investigation as to whether or not it is a promising practice.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

3 There is sufficient balance of anecdotal and quantitative information in the submission to assess the level of success of the practice from a client perspective.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

C. REPLICABILITY

4 This practice likely has the potential for replication across various programs and sites.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

SCORE: ***/20***

Date: ___________________

EAPD PPPC member signature_________________________